

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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# UNION SOCIETY

## NOTTINGHAM ELECTION.

I TRUST that the people of Nottingham, always the foremost in deeds praiseworthy, will now, by choosing Mr. EAGLE, show, that they are what their fathers were.

## THE MINISTRY.

*Bolt-court, 22. July, 1834.*

WHEN I wrote the last *Register* I was not in possession of all the facts relating to this affair. They have all now come out; and now I can lay the history fully before my readers. I was not in possession of dates so exactly as I am now.

On the 18. of April the Marquis of Wellesley informed the Government here, that it would be necessary to *renew the Coercion Bill in all its parts*. There were certain clauses in it that enabled the Lord-Lieutenant to suppress public meetings of every description, in every part of the country, though held for the purpose of petitioning Parliament, whether that part of the country where the meeting was held, was in a state of disturbance or not. This part of the bill was for the purpose of suppressing that which is called *political agitation*; and the Lord-Lieutenant particularly said, that it was necessary to suppress this. The court-martial clause, or, what I have always called it, the red-coat-court-of-justice clause, it appears to have been agreed, on all hands, not to renew, but all the rest of the bill a majority of the cabinet determined to renew.

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On the 23. of June Lord WELLESLEY wrote over that he was willing to carry on the Government without the renewal of the bill in all its parts, *on the strength of the Coercion Bill*. Mr. O'CONNELL, that that part of the bill would not be renewed, and he appears to have told him that he was authorized by Lord ALTHORP to tell him so; and, that he *had* told him so was discovered by Lord ALTHORP on the 7. of July.

It appears that the letter in which Lord Wellesley expressed himself as willing to go on without the clauses that interfered with political agitation, was a *private* letter to Lord Grey, written in consequence of representations made to Lord WELLESLEY by Mr. Littleton. This letter was communicated to the cabinet, which came to a division on the subject, when it appears, that those *for* and *against* the clause stood as follows:

### FOR.

Lord Grey,  
Lord Lansdowne,  
Lord Auckland,  
Lord Melbourne,  
Lord Carlisle,  
Lord Brougham,  
Lord Palmerston,  
Mr. Poulett Thomson.

### AGAINST.

Lord Althorp,  
Mr. Spring Rice,  
Mr. Ellice,  
Lord John Russell,  
Mr. Abercrombie.

On the 7. of July Lord Althorp, finding that his name had been mentioned to Mr. O'CONNELL, who, of course, had been softened in his proceedings by this assurance, determined to have nothing to do with the carrying of the bill with those clauses still in it. Until he found that he had been committed in this manner, he thought himself bound to act in conformity with the decision of the majority of the ca-

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binet; but, finding that he was thus committed, he saw the impossibility of his carrying the bill through the House of Commons with those clauses in it; and he therefore resolved to *quit his place*. This having been communicated to Lord Grey, who, knowing that he could not carry the bill without Lord Althorp, quitted his place.

Lord Althorp, it should be recollected, told us in the House of Commons, *long before any communication was made to Mr. O'Connell by Mr. Littleton*; long before this, he told us, that there were to be *alterations in the Coercion Bill*. The intention to renew the bill had just been announced to the House of Lords by Lord Grey. Mr. O'Connell, hearing this, came into the House of Commons very much agitated, and asked Lord Althorp whether it was the intention of the Government to renew the bill: to which Lord Althorp answered: "It is our intention to propose the renewal of it, with *some alterations*." So that it clearly appears, that he, from the very first, was resolved upon "*some alterations*"; and the court-martial clause was but one alteration.

Finding it impossible to go on with the Government at all without Lord Althorp, the rest of the cabinet, with the sole exception of Lord Grey, have submitted to carry through the bill without the obnoxious clauses in it; and it was brought into the House of Commons and read a first time last Friday night, and read a second time on Monday night; while the bill brought by Lord Grey into the other House *lies there to expire in silence*.

Perhaps there never was, take it altogether, a more curious occurrence than this. Here is a majority of a cabinet compelled to submit to a minority; or rather, to say the truth, to submit to one of the members of that minority. Lord Althorp, seeing that they were willing thus to submit, had no longer any ground for resigning; and indeed, not to have kept his place under such circumstances, would have been to show great disregard for the peace of the country and for the interests of the

King. The accusation preferred against him is, that it was he in fact who, through Mr. Littleton, prevailed upon Lord Wellesley to write the second letter. I see no harm in that. It was in order to prevail upon Lord Grey to change his opinion, he, Lord Althorp, having so great a reluctance to propose the measure to the House of Commons in its then shape; and well he might have such reluctance, after having most solemnly pledged himself, as he did last year, to do away with that horrible measure as soon as possible.

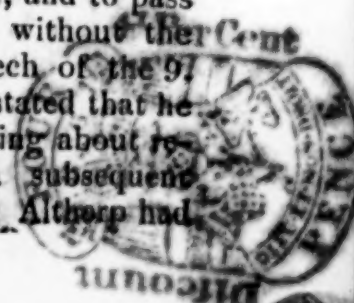
This transaction has established, beyond all doubt, that the Tories, AS THEY ARE CALLED, and all their political doctrines, are down for ever. There is no doubt that the King would have no objection to them; but they saw that they could not go on for a moment with this House of Commons. There is no doubt also that the majority of the cabinet yielded with very great reluctance; but they were compelled to yield or quit their places. They felt that the House of Commons was totally independent of them; and that in fact they could do nothing to which that House would not give its assent; and they further saw that Lord Althorp had an influence in that House, such as no other man had or was likely to have; and he is now, by whatever names or titles the several Ministers may go, THE MINISTER OF THE COUNTRY; and to him Ireland is indebted, and solely to him, for the non-introduction of the hateful clauses of the Coercion Bill; and he is bringing in *his own bill*; and the Tories will vote for it, and the Lords will vote for it, reproaching him most bitterly all the while. The rage of the Tories is perfectly boundless; they endeavour in all sorts of ways to cause it to be believed that he has *betrayed* Lord Grey. How can that be? He first resigned himself. His language was this: You are about to put upon me the carrying of a measure, against the carrying of which it is well known that I have declared my opinion. I cannot do this, and I must therefore leave you to carry it by some other hands. Nothing could be fairer than this. He



was bound, perhaps, to make some sacrifices; but nothing could bind him to make a sacrifice of his character for ever; and the loss of that character would besides have rendered him useless to Lord Grey. This is what he could not do; and yet, without him it was impossible for Lord Grey to go on.

Lord Grey has to blame nobody but himself. He need not have persevered in insisting upon the whole of the bill. But while I should be very sorry to be capable of over-looking the good things that Lord Grey has done during his long political life-time, particularly the integrity which has always marked his character, it is justice to say of him that he has always, whether in power or out of power, taken a *high and haughty tone*: has always been for "*vigour*," which has been a favourite word with him; has always appeared to rely upon *force* rather than upon conciliatory measures; and it is not to be disguised that his four years of sway have been four years of memorable severity towards the people, in England as well as in Ireland; and, if the Irish forget quickly he may depend upon it that the English will not. It is very curious that, in his very first speech after he became Minister, he promised the Lords that he would *not be deficient in vigour*; and that he closes his career with a volunteer offer to take charge of, and to carry through, if he can, the Poor-Law Bill; while he actually quits his place because Lord Althorp will not consent to attempt to carry through the Irish Coercion Bill in its most odious and wholly unmitigated shape; nor is it to be forgotten that one of his very first acts was an *augmentation of the standing army* in time of peace. Amidst the performance of deeds like these, there seems to be great weakness in him to talk about keeping pace with the "*spirit of the age*." What does he mean by this phrase? One would have thought that it meant an increasing desire in the people for an extension of their freedom; while all his measures and all his language, would lead us to suppose, that all his views were of precisely a contrary description. I remember that,

when he was in power in 1807, his carriage towards the people was just what it has been now; I remember particularly his very harsh and severe conduct towards Mr. Paull, who had been a candidate for the city of Westminster. Upon that occasion I said, as may be seen in the Register of that date: "My Lord Howick, you and I are of the same age, and if we both live a few years we shall see the time when haughty and supercilious looks and tone will not avail you." The precise words I do not recollect, but I know that it was during the session of Parliament of 1807, and during the discussions on a petition presented to the House of Commons by Mr. Paull. This haughtiness and love of *force* have always distinguished him, and to that he now owes his fall; for FALL it is, let what may be done with an endeavour to disguise it. As to *his age*, it is nonsense! It is only three years and three quarters since he became Minister. If he be too old for a Minister now, he was too old then; and the plain truth is, that he had no power but that which he derived from the character of Lord Althorp. Somehow or other the severities were never ascribed to the latter; but always to himself. The menacing tone which he always held was doubtless the cause of this. But, so it was; and he was actually worn out as a Minister: the nation was weary of his threats and severities. You meet not with a single man who is not glad that he is no longer a Minister. As to Lord Brougham, his is a curious predicament. I should like to see the man, who, with the means of eating and drinking and of covering his back at command, can *envy* that noble person. He approved of the bill with the clauses in it; he defended those clauses to the utmost: he said, in defence of them, just what the Tories now say; and yet, he is now ready to receive, to defend, and to pass the bill of Lord Althorp without the clauses in it! In his speech of the 9<sup>th</sup> of July when Lord Grey stated that he had resigned, he said nothing about resigning himself. In a subsequent speech he said that Lord Althorp had



been *misinformed* when he stated that the cabinet was dissolved; he said that the cabinet was *complete*, with the *exception* of the places of Lords Grey and Althorp; and there were people to believe that he really meant to be *Minister himself!* How a thought like this could come into any brain not actually swimming in laudanum and brandy, mixed up with a considerable portion of hereditary insanity, I cannot imagine; but there really was an idea of this sort afloat, strengthened no doubt by the noble lord's rather ostentatious assertions, that he had *so long possessed the confidence of his sovereign and of the country!* Be this as it may, the noble lord has discovered that, notwithstanding the *necessity* of the clauses, the adoption of which he so strongly urged, it is quite proper in him to remain in his present place and to support Lord Althorp's bill without the clauses, notwithstanding the Ministry was quite complete, *all but* the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer; that is to say, in fact, that they might go on very well without this same Lord Althorp. The Morning Chronicle worked hard for three or four days to make the public believe, that, at all events, Lord Brougham's retaining power was absolutely necessary to the very existence of the Government. It did not absolutely say that he ought to be Prime Minister, but it insinuated as much: the troops of commissioners were all in alarm. They may be safe for the present; but I am very much deceived if commissions will be so fruitful as they were under the sway of Lord Grey. I am very much of the opinion that we shall see a great change in that respect, I deeming it impossible that Lord Althorp should give his countenance to such a mode of carrying on the Government and such a mode of expending the public money.

Every one is now satisfied that the real power is now in the hands of Lord Althorp; but nobody will know better than he, that, in proportion to his power must be *the weight* upon his shoulders; and that weight is such, that one would think nothing short of madness on the

one hand, or of very extraordinary devotion to his country on the other, could induce any man living voluntarily to assume it. In this case it must be the latter, because he is a man of extraordinarily good understanding. When he came into power, his proposition to tax the transfers of stock, led me to hope that he saw the absolute necessity of relieving the land and the labour of the country of a part of the enormous burdens occasioned by the usurers. No proposition in the world was ever more reasonable: nothing ever was more just. Land pays a tax upon its transfer; goods of all sorts pay a tax on their transfer; why not stock pay a tax on its transfer? He did not make the proposition without having satisfied himself of its justice and of its practicability. Yet he was driven from it, and that, too, without cause assigned by himself. It was, observe, a proposition in his own department, and originating with himself. Will he confess that he was foolish or unjust in making this proposition? He will confess no such a thing. Well, then, having the power now, which he has completely, and assured to him in the solidest manner, will he not adopt that which he thought ought to have been adopted; or will he still be induced to hunt about after modes of relief, which, besides their dangerous and revolutionary character, must of necessity be wholly ineffectual for the purpose?

The difficulties which he has to overcome are of a very stubborn nature. The claims of Dissenters, the corporation abuses, the squabbling about tithes, the reforms of the church: as to all these there is great division of opinion in the country; but a demand for the lightening of their burdens; in this the people are unanimous, from the landowner down to the hand-loom weaver and the labourer; and this demand he will not be able long to resist without resorting to a paper-money not convertible into gold. The pressure is so great upon the owners and occupiers of land; so great upon every one who does not live upon the taxes, that he must lessen it, or he cannot go on. His character,



and the circumstances which are known to surround him, have enabled him to get through what no other man in the kingdom would have dared to encounter; but even that character and those circumstances will not be able to support him in the carrying on of this system of taxation and of expenditure. A very large part of the House of Commons lean most implicitly upon his judgment and his integrity; but, if he persevere in this system, which is fattening swarms of idlers and usurers at the expense of legitimate owners of estates and of the industrious classes of every description, universal clamour from without will assail him in a very short time; and he will find himself by degrees deserted from within. He alone it is that has supported the system thus far during the last three years; but he himself cannot support it for another three years.

Why is it that he has the power now? Because it was impossible to find another man who would have had the smallest chance of prevailing with the House of Commons to keep up the present amount of taxes. If Lord Brougham had been made Prime Minister, I warrant you he would have found a Chancellor of the Exchequer pretty soon; but, then, where was he to have found one that would have been able to persuade the gentlemen of England, that it was proper to raise fifty millions a year from them in gold, with wheat, upon an average through the kingdom, of five and threepence the bushel? Very easy to get a Chancellor of the Exchequer. Aye, and a man to make very pretty speeches too, but not a man to effect a purpose like this.

For this reason I wish the noble and learned lord had been made Prime Minister. His Chancellor of the Exchequer would not have been able to make the House rescind its motion upon the malt-tax; no, this was the difficulty, and the only difficulty that there was in the forming of the Ministry. There were candidates enough for the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, I dare say; but the thing was to find a man at whose suggestion the

House of Commons would consent to continue to pay the fundowner two bushels of wheat for one; and Lord Althorpe himself would not be able to make them continue to do this for three years longer. To a man whose money, not convertible into gold he would not come, I believe. If he were to do it, revolution would come in that way. It is most likely that he will endeavour to uphold the present system of taxation as long as he can; that he will beat about amongst tithes and poor-rates to find out the means of relief; but that, at last, he will either come to a reduction of the interest of the debt, and a great reduction of the other expenses, or give up the thing in despair, leaving it to take its chance and to beat about amongst the rocks of revolution.

#### RURAL AFFAIRS.

I AM told that a very fine field of the *Italian clover*, the *trifolium incarnatum*, which has made so much talk in the neighbourhood of Reading, came from seed sold by me. I am afraid that this is not true; for I am afraid that some at least of the seed that I sold is not the *trifolium incarnatum*. It will be remembered that I notified that I did not know any thing about the seed; but that if it were of the same sort as that which I had seen in the Isle of Wight, it would stand the winter, and was a very excellent thing. I had no opportunity of sowing any in the fall of the year to any extent; and, therefore, I could not ascertain to a certainty, whether it would stand the winter or not. That point, however, has been now ascertained by Sir J. TYRRELL, in Essex, and also at Reading. Circumstances which are of no importance to the reader, prevented me from sowing any of the seed until the 19. of May. I then sowed a little drill of it, which was fifteen inches high on the 13. of July, with a white blossom in the shape of the common red clover. So that this is not the *trifolium incarnatum*, at any rate; although a thing of surprisingly quick growth and very fine

food for horses. At the same time I sowed a yard square of *lucerne*, in little drills; a yard square of the seed of the *incarnatum* that I got in the Isle of Wight: one drill of white clover, and one drill of broad clover. The broad clover far exceeds the *incarnatum* in bulk, at this time, and so does the white clover; and I am very much disposed to believe that if either of these were sowed in September in clean ground, and some of the *trifolium incarnatum* sowed at the same time and in the same sort of ground, either of the two former would beat the latter in quantity of food for horses, in the succeeding month of May or June. The broad clover sown on the 19. of May, in clean ground, and good ground, but without manure, is now *nine inches high*. But the *lucerne*, then! I cut the yard of *lucerne* on the 17. of July; and it weighed one pound five ounces and a quarter, which is about *three tons to the acre*. It will yield two more cuttings this summer; and these two cuttings will yield at the rate of five tons to the acre at each cutting; that is to say, thirteen tons to the acre *the first summer*. This plant *lasts for ever*. To be sure, it must be *kept clean*, and have a *dry bottom* soil; but there is hardly any farm which has not some few acres of such ground. Nothing yet heard of equals this. Upon the whole, I do not think that the *incarnatum* will beat the broad clover, as early food for horses and cattle, if both be treated in the same manner.

My Cobbett-Corn is exceedingly fine where it has not been assailed by the *wire-worm*. Where it has, I have sowed turnips between; so that, even in this case, there is very little loss arising from the failure of the corn. I never saw any so fine as that which is not assailed by the wire-worm.

**CABBAGES.** Those who have read my *COTTAGE ECONOMY*, which gives the instructions for keeping a cow all the year round on the produce of a statute quarter of an acre of ground, are aware of the high opinion that I have long had of the cabbage culture for the purpose of cattle feeding. This year, fear-

ing that I should be short of hay, I resolved to mow a meadow of seven acres which has never before been mowed, but has always been fed by cows and other cattle; yet, as I had ten cows and a bull to keep during the summer, and no pasture land until after hay-making time, I was obliged to provide something to supply the place of this meadow. I determined upon having *two acres and a half* of cabbages. I had no plants, or I should have planted them out in November. I bought some of Mr. Poynter, of Fulham, in the first week in March, and they cost me four pounds. Middle of March I planted them, twenty thousand plants, four thousand early York and sixteen thousand early Battersea, on two acres and a half of ground, and on ridges four feet apart. Beginning of June 3. or 4., I began to feed my cows with them and also the pigs, flinging the cabbages about the yard morning and night. There have been ten cows and a bull and fifty hogs and pigs (thirty-eight of which about a year old), living on these cabbages from the first week in June to this day; and *one half* of the cabbages are not yet consumed. The cows are as fat as milch-cows *can be*; and the hogs (except sows that are giving suck) are quite fit to kill for fresh pork. The cows are turned out on a bare field for air, but the hogs and pigs have had *nothing but cabbages*. This field of cabbages will last till the middle of September; we take away the *bursting* ones first. I should like to hear of any thing to produce a quantity of food equal to this from two acres and a half of ground. As the ground is cleared, a new plantation follows; and by the time that you have finished the first plantation you may begin upon the second, which will carry you on till near Christmas, and all from the same piece of ground. I was not in a condition to have *plants*, so that I am not so complete in this respect as I should have been. Now I am provided with plants of all sorts; and I am about to plant six acres with savoy (the richest of all cabbages), which will have large loaves the latter end of November. It is seldom that



our winters will injure a savoy-cabbage ; and I verily believe that these six acres of savoys would, without anything else, keep the whole of the stock above-mentioned from Christmas-day to Lady-day ; though it would not be desirable to feed upon them quite so late.

It is a great mistake to suppose that what are called *cattle-cabbages* are fittest for cattle. Dogs will eat carrion, or bullock's liver ; but no one will contend that it is *better for them* than slices of roast beef or leg of mutton ; in short, *cattle-cabbages* are coarser things, having not half the nutrition in them that the *fine garden-cabbages* have. The proof of the good quality of these garden-cabbages is, not that the milch-cows are as fat as milch-cows can be, and that they give great quantities of milk, and make what I think will prove to be, when it is of proper age, excellent cheese ; this is not the proof, for the cows were wintered most excellently well, and they might have done upon *cattle-cabbages* as well as they have upon these. But that which will be allowed to be a proof by every body who knows any thing of the matter is this, that a hog from six months to a year old not only *lives* and *grows* but *partly fats* by feeding upon these cabbages twice a day, and having *nothing else*, not even the washings of a swill-tub. There are several of these young hogs which were in very good case in the spring, having had sometimes Swedish turnips and sometimes mangel-wurzel ; but since they have had the cabbages they are actually growing fat ; and as all the animals feed together, the hogs have not the best of it, the cows generally taking the first bite into the loaves of the cabbages. The bull is in a condition fit to be killed for beef ; and I am sure that these cabbages alone would make an ox right fat between May and December, and that one acre of cabbages would fat two large oxen, if not three.

There is another great mistake ; and that is, the supposition that a *greater weight* on an acre is produced by the *cattle-cabbages*. The monstrous stems and monstrous under-leaves require four

feet each way for each plant, that is to say, about *two thousand five hundred* upon an acre. My cabbages are four feet one way and fifteen inches the other way, which makes them about *eight thousand* upon the acre, so that there are eight of these to three and a half of the other ; some of these weigh twelve pounds with a stem not bigger than my thumb. The *cattle-cabbage* has a stem as big as your wrist at the least, and makes a considerable part of its weight. I believe the crop to be much heavier of these garden-cabbages than any crop for cattle that I ever saw.

But this is far from being all. For to have *cattle-cabbage* ripe at the beginning of the winter you must sow them in the *month of August* at latest, plant them out in *February* at the latest ; and thus they must occupy the ground for eleven months after they are put out. Whereas of the other cabbages you may have three crops *completely loaved* on the same ground in the same time. I have a memorandum of the year 1831 in these words : " The early " dwarf-cabbages, sowed 8. of June, " planted out 28. July, have now *hard* " *loaves*, and some of them are burst- " ing." This is under the date of the 30. of September ; that is, one hundred and fourteen days from the time of dropping the seed into the ground to the time of cutting the loaved cabbages ; and only *sixty-two days* for them to occupy the ground after being planted out ; so that, by having beds of cabbage plants always at hand (and nothing is so easy), you may keep the ground always full of cabbages coming on, and make ten acres of land produce more food than is generally found on all the pastures of a considerable arable farm. But attention must be paid, and it requires but very little, to be *provided always with beds of plants*. Attention must also be paid to adapt the *sorts* of cabbages to the season of the year. My main crop this year is the early Battersea, such as are universally raised by the market-gardeners around London and sold in the London markets. It is a very good cabbage, but it is not so early by fifteen days as the *early York*,

and not so early by nearly a month as the *early dwarf*. Of these greater numbers still will stand upon an acre; so that you still have the same weight of crop however small the sort. Great attention is necessary also as to the sort. It has taken me now more than seven years to get perfectly true seed. If you think to do it by saving the seed from the stump of a particularly fine cabbage and planting it by itself at a great distance from every thing of the kind, you may find yourself deceived. For it may have come from a seed along with other seeds from a bad plant; and then the seeds that you save will produce some bad ones. You must keep on expelling the bad ones *for years* before you will get the seed to be true. Mr. JOHNSON, of Manchester, had a very fine early dwarf cabbage, and as nothing of the kind could stand anywhere near it, within miles, as far as I know, I begged of him to save me the seed, which he did. I sowed it with great care, and a full fourth part of the plants were a sort of kale. This therefore is a matter worthy of great attention.

The excellence of cabbage, if you have these sorts especially, is, the circumstance that they stand in the *bed*, and wait for your taking them to plant out; and that they can go out when your ground is ready; and that they occupy the ground where they are to come to perfection for so short a space of time. Plants for six acres of ground occupy a bed of not more than six or seven rods. I have seen cabbage fields to the north, but I never yet saw a really good one. It is a monstrous mistake to suppose that they are only *for winter use*, or are to be used only in October, or November, or December. There, are then, Swedish turnips and mangel-wurzel; but there are not these in May and June, when you may have early cabbages, and when you want to keep the cattle out from the meadows and the clover fields. My crop is very fine this year, and has gone beyond all my calculations in my "*COTTAGE ECONOMY*."

Of the *fattening* quality of the fine sorts of cabbages, the *hog* is my proof. After six or eight months old, a hog will

*live* upon mangel-wurzel, Swedish turnips, raw potatoes; and in summer time, he will *live* upon lucerne, or on fresh broad clover; but at the utmost he will only keep himself in a state of health, without a slop, or without corn of some sort, or in some shape; but upon these cabbages, if he be above nine months old, he will fatten to a certain extent without any assistance from the *trough*, and without a grain of corn of any sort. If you come to either of these there is plague and there is expense: you must take the thing just as it comes out of the field, or the profit in rearing him is very doubtful; and you can keep no more than your milk-slops and your porridge-pots, or your corn-bins, will allow you to keep. The hog-kind are expensive and troublesome until they be *six months* old; after that, if you keep them *without corn*, or *trough*, they are little trouble and expense. At *six months* they are, if lean, hardly worth at this time, 25s., but a hog, *two years old*, is worth from 4*l.* to 5*l.*, for give him three-quarters of barley, and he will weigh 20 score, and then he is worth 10*l.*, and the barley will not sell for more than 4*l.* at most; and he is, like a sack of wheat, *every body's money*. But you must keep him till he be *two years old*; and this you must do *without corn* or *trough*. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance for a farmer to be *provided with food*, on which he will thrive during the two years, summer as well as winter, and food other than *corn* or *trough*.

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ON THE 21. JULY, I PRESENTED THE FOLLOWING PETITIONS TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

1. *Farmers meeting at Banbury-market.* Complains of the monstrous evils inflicted on the country by the *malt-tax*; and prays for its immediate abolition.
2. *Cartwright Club.* Sets forth the great disappointment of the people at the result of the Reform Bill; complains of the frightful state of society in this country, trades' unions, burnings, &c.; all pro-



duced by heavy taxation. Prays for annual Parliaments, universal suffrage, and vote by ballot.

3. Doon (Limerick). States that the parish contains above 800 families, only 6 of whom are Protestants; that they are compelled to pay 900*l.* a year to a Protestant parson; that the people actually die of starvation. They, therefore, pray that the tithes may be appropriated for the relief of the poor, and that the deficiency be made up by a compulsory poor-rate.

4. National Union of the Working Classes. Prays for the repeal of the union.

5. Aughagane (Mayo). Repeal of the union.

6. Same place. Prays for the total abolition of tithes, in name and effect.

7. Stratford-upon-Avon. Prays for the abolition of all oppressive taxes; and, in lieu thereof, for a tax upon the debt, as the only means of preserving this form of Government. Same place. Prays for the total abolition of tithes, church-rates, and all other ecclesiastical dues.

8. John Templer, Lymington. Sets forth that none of the tithes in his parish are received by the parson, or applied to the use of the church.

9. Pitmen of the Tyne and Wear, (signed by several thousands). Prays for the repeal of the export duties on coals, and for universal suffrage, annual Parliaments, and vote by ballot.

10. Hand-loom weavers of Leigh, Lancaster. Complains of their dreadful distress, and prays for the establishment of a board of trade for the regulation of the rate of wages.

11. John Phillips, Great Chapel-street, Westminster. Complains that a seizure of his goods was made for arrears of assessed taxes; that, though the amount of such arrears was but 17*l.*, goods to the value of 40*l.* were taken from him; that no inventory was left with petitioner, nor does he know of the ultimate destination of his property; and

that all this was done without the production of any authority by the sheriff's officer who made the distraint. Prays the House for protection and redress.

12. Thomas Poynter, North End, Fulham. Sets forth that he is a gardener and bookseller; that he has been a bookseller in consequence of his anxiety for the "diffusion of Useful Knowledge," having the imposing example of the Lord Chancellor before his eyes, and that he sold a book of which he was the author; that petitioner claimed an exemption from the Window-Tax, according to the Act, on his shop, but that his claim was disallowed. He therefore prays for the total abolition of the Window-Taxes.

13. Robert Dent (writer), Durham. Prays that the House will reject the Sabbath bill; but that, if it pass, some other day in the week may be allotted for the recreation of the working people.

14. Coalmen on the river Clyde. Prays the House to reject the newly-proposed method of measuring the tonnage of shipping.

15. John Mudge. Sets forth that he was forcibly driven from the town of Witherby in Yorkshire, by a Mr. Scott, a magistrate; that petitioner had committed no act of vagrancy, of drunkenness, of assault, or any annoyance even to any body; that the said magistrate committed petitioner to Wakefield prison for a month, which was not enforced, on condition of his leaving the town instantly, which he did: petitioner has laid the case before Lord Melbourne, but has got no redress. He, therefore, prays the House for justice.

16. W. F. G. Waldron. Prays for a law to prevent any person working more than five days in the week, and, ultimately, to restrict it to four days.

17. Edward J. Jones, Craven-buildings, Drury-lane, coal-merchant. Sets forth that, in 1832, he landed seven tons of coals at the Horse-

- ferry, Millbank ; and that a demand of 2s. 6d. for the same was made in the name of the *Marquis of Westminster* : that he would not pay this sum till he had cause shown him : that thereupon an action was commenced against him *in the Court of King's Bench* : that he has twice been prepared to defend himself ; that his witnesses attended five days ; but that the plaintiff has always succeeded in procuring delay. Prays that the House will prevent the wealthy from dragging the poor into expensive courts for so *trifling a sum as two and sixpence*, as the suit has cost petitioner *already 200l., without ever having had a trial.*
18. *Repeal Association, Manchester.* Sets forth that the Poor-Laws Amendment Bill is an act of spoliation and robbery on the poor ; and prays that the House will not proceed with the bill, until all who are interested in its provisions have *had time to become acquainted with its contents.*
19. Of Mr. EDWARD EDWARDS, complaining that divers officers of the Navy have obtained their commissions in an unlawful manner ; and praying that a committee may be appointed to inquire into the matter.
20. Inhabitants of EASTHAM, Cheshire, complaining of the enormous sums charged as *burial fees*, and praying for a law to regulate them.
21. Certain inhabitants of Brentford, praying the House to maintain the rights of the poor.
22. Political Union and others of Brentford, praying for shorter Parliaments and a more extended suffrage.
23. Political Union and others of Maidstone, praying for a reduction of that taxation which presses so heavily on the working classes.
24. From the same, praying for an extension of the *right to vote* for members of this House, and praying, that the *qualification* of members may be changed from *possession of land*, to possession of *knowledge, integrity, and political courage.*
25. Manchester Repeal Association complain that Mr. CLEAVE is imprisoned for circulating *cheap and useful knowledge*, which his Majesty's Ministers make a display of their wish to see the people educated ; and they pray that the House will cause inquiry to be made into the matter.
26. Protestant Dissenters in the Borough of Oldham, pray for an *abolition of the connexion between Church and State*, which they look upon as the cause of all those ecclesiastical restrictions and all those unjust demands, to which they are subjected, and which common sense as well as common justice condemn. I pressed this petition on the attention of the House ; its ability, its clearness, its sensible statements, and its moderation of tone, all concurring to claim for it particular attention and respect. But, I added, that never would the Dissenters obtain any redress until they cordially *united*, and united too *with the church-people*, who have as much to complain of as they have.

### INTENDED VISIT TO IRELAND.

I HAVE resolved to see this country with my own eyes ; to judge for *myself*, and to give a true account of it, as far as I am able, to the people of England. I am resolved to go, as if to a country about which I had never said a word. I have, now, for two sessions of Parliament, listened to such contradictory statements, both coming from gentlemen of unimpeachable veracity, that it is impossible I should not desire to have the evidence of the facts before me. It is impossible for me to disbelieve, wholly and entirely disbelieve, all the statements made on either side. In short, I have a desire to know the real truth ; and if I cannot get at it by seeing the country, very few men can. I



have seen the claims of the Irish people to *free trade* granted. The want of that was then the burden of complaint; next, *Catholic Emancipation* was to heal every wound: it was granted to an extent never called for, and that has failed. The existence of *tithe* and of *church-rates* was next the great scourge of Ireland; the latter has been abolished, and the former has been so far extinguished as hardly to be a bone of contention; yet the discontents and troubles are as great as ever. I have, ever since the year 1812, or thereabouts, contended for a *legal provision for the destitute* in Ireland: I am satisfied that nothing but that can make that fine and populous country what it ought to be; but I have a desire to know whether this my opinion is well founded. I fear that, if Ireland continue in this state of alienation from England, for many years longer, very great dangers will arise from it, especially in case of war with the United States of America, which must come first or last; and few things would give me so much happiness as to see that danger completely and for ever rendered impossible. It will be my duty, while in Ireland, to inculcate my own opinions relative to the remedy for the evils of that country; and in doing this, I must be clear from the influence of any consideration whatever, relative to the opinions of others.

For this reason, and in order to keep myself clear of all bias; in order that I may discharge this duty in the manner that becomes me, it is my resolution to be present at no public dinner; to be a guest at the house of no gentleman in that country; but, to go from inn to inn, and to mix, as much as I can, with persons in the middle rank of life, and to see as much as I can of the real state of the working people of the country. I know, that to refuse invitations is disagreeable; but this I shall undergo, rather than suffer myself to be committed in any conversations, or to be biassed on the one side or the other, in the smallest degree. I will go to no public meeting whatsoever, indoors or out-of-doors. If I find it con-

venient, and likely to be useful, I shall proceed precisely as I did in Scotland, avoiding, by all means, in so inflammable a country, to meddle with any question in which the utterance of my opinions might be likely, in any degree whatsoever, to widen the breach which now so unhappily exists. I am aware that a feeling of gratitude to me exists in the breasts of all Catholics. I wish them to remember, however, that I am a Protestant of the church of England myself; and I here repeat to them what I said to DOCTOR DOYLE, that the *History of the Protestant Reformation was simply the effect of my desire to do justice, and no more than justice, to the character and the religion of those, our own forefathers, who built the cathedrals and the churches.* If they bear this in mind, and after this abatement think me worthy of their thanks, it is very well; but I wish to be clearly understood as entitled to them on no other condition. My desire is, to see such a state of things as to make me believe that England (in which name I include the whole kingdom) will *always be*; not only for my lifetime, but always, the greatest country in the world; and I would not give a straw for any effort that did not include that object. I do not desire to see the form of government changed; but, let what will come, "*let England be the greatest, the happiest country in the world.*" That has been my ruling passion ever since I arrived at the age of serious thought. I fear that it will not be so, without a perfect reconciliation between this country and Ireland. I believe (though the belief may be vain) that my going to Ireland at this time may have a tendency to ensure that object, and therefore to Ireland I will go.

Precisely when I shall start, or to what place I shall go first, I have not yet made up my mind. Probably immediately after the prorogation of Parliament I shall commence this tour, relative to which I shall have other opportunities of stating particulars.

### POOR-LAW BILL.

UPON the motion of BROUGHAM this bill has been read a second time in the House of Lords; and it will, I dare say, be passed. I, believing this, and knowing how sharp the *fangs* of the THING are, shall, in my *writings*, take care to keep out of the reach of those fangs. But, I am by no means disposed to let the subject *drop*. The speech of BROUGHAM lets out *his*, and *all their*, real INTENTIONS; and that those intentions are (to the full extent) *what I described them*, in my speech on the *third reading*, is now manifest to all but the stark blind. I shall insert here below, from the *Times newspaper*, the whole of this debate in the Lords; and I request the particular attention of the reader to the speech of LORD RADNOR, which has *surprised* me more than any thing I ever read in all my life! We must have this debate ON RECORD; on safe record; for it will be matter to refer to in *three years time*, or thereabouts. I will next week, in the form of a letter to LORD RADNOR, canvass this debate; I will ask *him* some questions, which I should like to see him attempt to answer; and I will not fail to deal properly with the doctrines of BROUGHAM.

This last-mentioned man, who is, it seems, *now* ready to support the Irish Bill, *without the clauses*, talks of the "*gulf*" of poor-rates, into which the *lords' estates* are falling. Why, does not he know, then, that the money collected under the *name* of poor-rates is *not half* received by the poor? Let him (no: *not him*; but LORD RADNOR) read the following letter from General JOHNSTONE, whom he knows very well; and, then talk of the "*gulf*" again, if he can. It is impossible to read this letter without seeing that the real object of this bill is, not to *lower the rates*, but to LOWER THE WAGES!! Let the working people *look to this*, and begin, *in time*, to be prepared for it. My letter to LORD RADNOR shall contain an exposition of the whole thing. Mark; the real object is to LOWER WAGES, and make the people live ON

A COARSER FOOD, in order to prevent the ESTATES from being "ENGULFED." The rates amount to about FOUR millions a year; but, the wages amount to FIFTY or SIXTY millions! Here is the "*true mine*"! If English working people can be brought to *potatoes* and *sea-weed*, and to go half naked, three-fourths of those millions will go into the pockets of the landowners. By every possible means that I can use, I will give circulation to my letter to LORD RADNOR; and, I will take good care, that not one single parish in Wiltshire or Berkshire, shall be without it. *Let him answer!* This is the cause of *farmers* and *tradesmen* as well as of *working men*. It is the *landowners* (including the parsons) on one side; and *all the rest of the community on the other side*. No: it is the fundholders, the dead-weight, and the army, that "ENGULF" their *estates*. And, did the *working people* contract the debt? Did *they* make the dead-weight? Did *they* cause *two millions* to be spent in *secret-service money* during the last forty years; and one million of it *since the peace*? Did *they* cause *fifty millions* to be given to *tax-gatherers alone* since the peace? Did *they* demand a standing army? Did *they* call for new palaces and for gateways, one of the last of which to cost *seventy thousand pounds*? Oh! these are not *their* works: and they are not, in consequence of them, to come to *potatoes* and *sea-weed*, and that my Lord Radnor shall KNOW. I think nothing of BROUGHAM's works, in this case: but, I think a great deal of Lord Radnor's works; and I will utter my thoughts without any disguise; and I shall have no scruple in taking it for granted, that his support of this bill is founded on the principles laid down by Brougham.

I have always been a supporter of the *rights of all* the orders in the state; I have always, even in opposition to the popular feeling and wishes, and much really to my own *disadvantage*, been a supporter of the rights and privileges of the *nobility*, and of all *landowners*; but, it was, of course, on the ground, that they were *not to take away*



*the rights of the working people, and the people in the middle rank of life. This bill, if it become a law, changes the whole of the constitution of government in England and Wales: the same relationships no longer exist; and every man is bound to act accordingly.*

Since the bill has been in the House of Lords; and, indeed, through the whole of the discussion relating to it, the *Times* newspaper has done its duty in hostility to this measure, with a degree of spirit, of ability, and of perseverance, such as has been rarely witnessed in any publication; and Mr. WALTER, the member for Berkshire, did his duty in opposing the second reading, in a manner not to speak in praise of which, I should, all the circumstances considered, be guilty of the most shameful meanness and neglect of my duty.

### GENERAL JOHNSTONE'S LETTER.

#### NEW POOR-LAW BILL.

*To the Rate-Payers of the County of Lincoln.*

I take the liberty of calling your attention to the Poor Bill now before Parliament, as a measure that appears to me pregnant with great and serious evil; and I earnestly recommend petitions to the House of Lords against so unjust, injurious, and unconstitutional a measure's becoming the law of the land.

I am afraid this bill, so hastily passed by the House of Commons, is very little understood in the country. It immediately deprives all rate-payers of every control over the money they may be called upon to pay in the shape, or under the name, of *poor-rates*. It takes all power of relief to the poor out of the parochial officers' hands, and places it in those of commissioners appointed by Government, strangers to us all. It gives most unconstitutional and dangerous power to these commissioners; who may incorporate any number of parishes, and may direct *poor-houses* to be built when and where they please, and may thus huddle together the unfortunate poor of numerous parishes, dividing families who may want only temporary relief; and even such relief as this, they may be obliged to go thirty or forty miles to seek.

It refuses all relief, out of these poor-houses, to the able-bodied, however willing and desirous they may be to procure work; thus compelling those who are unable to obtain work, either to steal or to starve! It empowers these commissioners, who are no way responsible to the parishes, to borrow money

on the parish rates to build these poor-houses; and also to borrow money to send people out of the country, if they can persuade them to go; thereby incurring a debt, or pawning the parish rates, in the same sort of way that "the debt commonly called *national*" has been incurred—a curse upon the country, and the real cause of all our evils. Taxes, tithes, and rates, were no burden till this monster came to live in idleness on the industry and labour of man.

It is not sending people out of the country, or huddling them together in large poor-houses, that is wanted; nor is it the want of work that requires doing; but it is, that there are not sufficient means in the hands of those who should naturally employ the people, to pay them for their labour. This bill professes to give relief to the agriculturist, but it does not show how; and what relief can such a measure give us, but that which it takes from the poorest of the poor? Is there a man in England who can wish for such relief as this?

The outcry that has been raised against the poor-laws is most unjust—in fact, the poor receive little more than half the sum raised under the name of "*poor-rates*." The county rates, and all other expenses of the parish (except the church and highway rates), are collected under the head of "*poor-rates*." In this part of the parish of Wytham (the hamlets of Toft, Lound, and Manthorpe, providing for their own poor) the poor-book of last year, on an expenditure of 182*l.* 2*s.*, shows the following sums: county-rates, 37*l.* 8*s.* 6*d.*; parish expenses, 25*l.* 6*s.*; together, 62*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.*; leaving 120*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.*, of which there appears to have been 17*l.* advanced to a woman to enable her to join her husband abroad, 6*l.* 19*s.* for medical attendance, and 8*l.* 16*s.* for coals (mostly in hand), which, if also taken from the above will leave only 87*l.* 8*s.* 6*d.* out of 182*l.* 18*s.* actually received by the poor. And in the preceding year, the proportions are much the same. I request any person to examine his own parish book, and he will find a large proportion of the money raised under the names of poor-rates does not go to the poor.

The clause relating to bastardy, as originally in the bill, was an absolute encouragement to seduction; it took away the natural right of a father to support his own child; and though certainly improved in the committee, still there is a cruel injustice upon the unfortunate female who may fall a victim to the falsehood or craft of man, which must occasion a heavy expense upon her family, or the parish.

In short, if this bill pass into law, there is an end of the right of Englishmen to distribute their own parochial funds, to the humane and charitable office of protecting their own poor. The unfortunate people will be huddled together like felons in a prison, subject to one common allowance, and under the discipline of commissioners appointed by Government, wholly unacquainted with every local connexion, and without the slightest parochial responsibility, which has for so many years

favoured and held together the connexion of one class of persons with another. Thus will every tie be broken between the unfortunate poor and the rate-payer. Nor is it probable that the "poor-rates" will be reduced by any such means as are provided by this bill; for all those who are to administer this law, should it unfortunately for *England* become such, will be *paid agents* of the *Minister of the day*!

Having acted as a magistrate for many years, well knowing how the present system works, and foreseeing how that intended must *oppress the poor* and *injure the rate-payer*, I have felt it a duty to endeavour to point out a few of the mischievous consequences, and the great injustice that will be done to the most helpless, if this unconstitutional and fatal measure should pass into law. I therefore strongly recommend petitions to the House of Lords to stop the bill.

I have the honour to remain,

Your very obedient servant,

W. A. JOHNSTONE.

*Wytham on the Hill, 9. July, 1834.*

#### DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS ON THE POOR-LAWS AMENDMENT BILL,

On Monday, 21. July, 1834.

The LORD CHANCELLOR then rose and said, that in rising to address their lordships on the present occasion, he was abundantly satisfied of the difficulty of the task he had undertaken. He rose to propose to their lordships a subject of paramount importance, an importance which was increased by its difficulties in principle, and its complexity in detail. On the present occasion he had not that satisfaction which it had often been his lot to enjoy, namely, of knowing that the subject matter of the bill to the second reading of which he had to invite their lordships' consent had been treated with equal favour amongst the people of this country as many other questions of reform, both political and legal, which it had been his lot to propound to their lordships. (Hear, hear). That the people at large were, generally speaking, more indifferent to this bill than their own interests, and their close connexion with those evils which made a change in the existing state of the poor-laws to themselves most desirable, would seem to justify. That they did not buoy up with their approbation those who brought forward the bill to which he (the Lord Chancellor) solicited the attention of their lordships he admitted; but he must also contend that many had manfully but rationally resisted all attempts which had been made to pervert their judgment, and to lead them to join in the clamour which had been raised, adverse to the principles of the measure, and that, indifferent as the public might more or less be to the magnitude of this

bill, and its vast interest to themselves, still the reflecting part of the community were decidedly with it, and he must add that the obloquy in store for those who gave their support to the measure was confined to a comparatively very small portion of the community of England and Wales. (Hear). If, however that proportion had been still less, if even a greater degree of obloquy had been cast upon this measure than had emanated from some individuals of great ability, of much knowledge, of well-earned influence over people's opinions on political matters and ephemeral topics involving political discussions; if the efforts of these individuals, acting most undoubtedly under the best of motives, but whose feelings were warmly excited, and being so, had taken a false direction, had been as successful as they had most manifestly, notoriously, and most creditably to the good sense of the people of England and Wales, failed entirely, he (the Lord Chancellor) would still have stood up in his place this day and proposed this very measure, and urged in its behalf the self-same arguments which it would be now his duty to address to the calm, dispassionate, and deliberate judgment of their lordships, a judgment perverted by no false feelings, biassed by no sinister views, actuated by no motives of self-interest, and interrupted by no kind of clamour from without (hear); and he would address through their lordships to the people out of the House the identical arguments in favour of the measure propounded, at the risk of earning for himself the obloquy which the individuals to whom he had adverted wished to raise and to increase. He should be most unworthy of the task committed to his hands, if by any such considerations, he could have been made to swerve from the duty he had undertaken. The subject involved questions too important, and the duties correlative to the importance of the interests affected, and which the House had to discharge, were of far too sacred a nature, as to make it impossible for any man who aspired to the name and character of a statesman, who had taken upon himself to counsel his Sovereign upon this matter, to listen to the dictates of clamour, or to sacrifice his duty to the courting of popular applause. (Hear). Those would best recommend themselves to the rational portion of their countrymen (including such as from habit might be less able to apply their judgment to the calm discussion of a question), those would best recommend themselves to the approval and gratitude of the people who should manfully carry through, with the aid of their lordships, a system of provision for the poor, which in his (the Lord Chancellor's) conscience, he believed would be most efficacious in its details, least objectionable in point of principle, and less sinning against any known rule of polity, than any ever yet proposed; a measure of sound legislation, and affording the nearest and surest prospect of terminating evils, the extent of which at present no tongue could adequately describe, and



the possible extent of which no fancy could picture; evils which the bad administration of mischievous laws had entailed upon this country, laws which bid fair to leave no portion of property secure, which interfered with the rewards of industry, and which had taken from the character of the English peasantry that high respect they formerly commanded, and on the contrary by the multiplication of these evils, had contributed to the increase of crime, had led to that state of things in which the rights of industry had been usurped by idleness and vice. Such was the result of the system which now stared the legislature in the face. In the midst of the outward profound tranquillity with which Providence had blessed this country, it was found disturbances prevailed in districts where formerly discontent was unknown, but in which content had given way to outrages little short of what had been termed agrarian wrongs. This was the state in which the matter now stood, and such was the result of that pernicious system which their lordships were now called upon to destroy by acceding to a measure which in a great degree had been prepared for their consideration by the other House of Parliament. He could assure their lordships that he derived some consolation from the persuasion that the discussion of this measure would not involve political faction or party. (Hear). On the contrary, he felt assured that no party or personal feeling would interfere in any discussion which might now take place upon the principle of the bill, or which might hereafter follow upon its details. (Hear). He might very fairly assert that most of their lordships were fully experienced in the poor-laws as now constituted, and that others might probably have refreshed their recollections by the perusal of the very able report of the poor-law commissioners. He might therefore assume that the subject was one in which all were conversant, and that it would consequently be superfluous if he entered into the complete mechanism of the present bill. He should however wish to state every point of maladministration of the present law, in order to show that the proposed remedy was specific and calculated to be efficient; and he was also sorry to state that it would be necessary for him shortly to glance at what was not immaterial with a view to the substance of the question, namely, the origin of the present bad system, and especially to the state of things in the early part of the present century. It had been incorrectly stated that the poor-laws originated with the dissolution of the monastic orders by Henry VIII. This was an error which had long prevailed, and upon which much stress had been laid at this period. It was not until the fifth year of the reign of Elizabeth that any system of poor-laws provided for a compulsory provision for the poorest classes of the people. He made this observation for the purpose of offering a comment upon an argument which had been raised against the church establishment and the tithe system, and which

had been pressed unfairly upon the question of the poor-laws. It had been said that one-fourth of tithes was properly applicable to the bishop, one-fourth to the parson, one-fourth for the repair of the church, and one-fourth for the sustentation of the poor. This was a mistake into which Selden himself had fallen, from not having examined into the provisions of the Saxon law, by which the application of those revenues was one-third to each of the three first parties. He admitted that so far back as the 15. of Richard II. an act passed which showed that the legislature then recognised the right of the poor to sustentation from tithes, and that that principle had been recognised in the reign of Elizabeth by the judges of the land, a principle which had also been quaintly adopted by Lord Mansfield in the reign of George III. It was beyond all doubt that the principal provision for the poor out of tithes was never more authorized by practice than that they received charity at the hands of the parson. He could not conceive any more mischievous arrangement, or one more calculated to multiply the number of poor, than that they had that or any other provision by a regulated fund. The result of all the statutes of Elizabeth, the 43. especially, with the exception of one portion, had been extreme inconvenience. So long as it was supposed that the provisions of those statutes attached only to the impotent, to those who from disease, age, worn-out faculties of body or mind (this he must observe was the language of the statute itself), and to none other (excluding able-bodied persons); he repeated, so long as that was the course of practice under that statute, if not advantageous, the provisions had proved no detriment. But the unfortunate words which followed, giving overseers the power to set poor people to work, interpreted as those words had first been, to find work for the pauper, and if work could not be obtained, then to provide food, the consequences of those provisions had been most pernicious to the rich, as well as to the poor themselves. He blamed not those who had imposed this construction upon this statute; it might be the sound meaning of the law, but if it were so, he must say a more pernicious law was never made. The statute of George III., passed in 1796, gave the industrious poor the right by law to be supported out of the parish rates in their own dwellings, although contracts had been made for their maintenance in the workhouses "held and established" (the words of the act) "for their reception in the day of their distress." It had been usual to blame magistrates for the maladministration of the poor-laws: he (the Lord Chancellor) was not, however, one of those who was able to enter this charge against them, nor to hold them answerable for the mischievous results arising from the provisions of the laws they were called on to administer. All that could be said against that respectable body (to whom the country was so much indebted, and of whom he should speak

more at large, but that he was sensible he was in an assembly composed of so many justices of the peace), the only charge that could be made against them was, that they were not wiser than those who had gone before them. The magistracy of this country had acquired the countenance of the first judges of the courts of law on points raised against their administration of these very poor-laws, and the liberal construction given by courts of law to the enactments in force encouraged magistrates in the liberal system they had ever pursued. Under such authority it was no wonder that magistrates should act in the manner that they had done, and that it should be found that principles were now established more wild than the most liberal of the magistrates of this country had ever contemplated. What had been the example afforded to them by the legislature itself? What had been Mr. Pitt's act, proposed in 1795, with reference to this subject? Mr. Pitt, a man versed in the details of the question, and acquainted with the best practical policy in this respect, brought in a Bill, which certainly did not pass into a law, legalizing the allowance system, the greatest bane to every branch of the community, and professing to proceed on the principle that every poor man had the right to be supported comfortably in his own dwelling, himself and his family, and to be furnished with a cow, a pig, or other animal, yielding reasonable and sufficient food. Such had been the sentiments of that enlightened statesman, and he mentioned this circumstance in justification of the liberal construction put by the magistracy of this country upon the provisions of the existing poor-laws. Therefore it was that he was not disposed to cast any reflection or imputation against those magistrates or judges of the land who had so adjudicated upon and carried into effect the administration of the poor-laws as to produce the present state of things, which all agreed to deprecate. He need not state, that it was contrary to the order of nature, that the legislature could be expected to make a man happy "in weal or woe"; and he now came to inquire what was the true principle which ought to direct its decisions in this respect, and whether or not poor-laws, as now administered, conformed to or sinned against that principle. He was aware that he should be charged with uttering an identical proposition if he said that the fundamental rule to regulate the conduct of their lordships as legislators, and the conduct of those who might be intrusted with the administration of the law, was, that a man should be paid according to the work he did, that he should be employed according to the demand of those who had work to give, that those employed should not live worse than those who were idle, and that the mere idler should not run away for himself with any portion of that which the industrious man had earned for his own support. (Hear, hear). This principle, though he might be charged with its being superfluous and useless on the

present occasion, was as self-evident as that two and two made four, and not five. Against this principle, however, the present system of poor-laws sinned, constantly, deliberately, and upon consideration: upon every instant, by day and by night, during winter and good weather, in famine and in plenty, in peace and in war, this principle was perpetually outraged, without change and without a shadow of change. (Hear, hear). It would doubtless be admitted that no man had a right to sit idle while another man worked; yet there must necessarily be a time, and there must occur occasions on which this principle would be abandoned of necessity, and that a person in sickness or in old age must be supported by the community, so that he did not perish. This led him to a point that was also connected with the poor-laws, namely, the argument that in these instances it should be left to private charity to afford relief, and that it would be a greater blessing both to him that gave and to him that received the bounty. He, however, did not object to compulsory provisions in these cases, subject, however, to proper regulation. The administration of this fund through the hands of parochial officers, of overseers, &c., was upon their own showing and confession, and in spite of themselves, open to the greatest abuses. When the poor knew that such a fund existed, that they could call upon it for support, and that it was unnecessary for them to provide against the calamities incidental to human life, as here they had the means always ready furnished and which they could claim as their own for their subsistence, the worst possible effects were produced upon their minds. The minds of the peasantry were thus debased and vitiated. The habits of honest industry, the habits which led them to support their families, their wives and children, their fathers and mothers, by their own industrious exertions, were in this way altogether banished from their minds. If he was not fearful of making a too didactic speech, he would go into a statement to prove that such inevitably was the case. He would satisfy himself, however, with one illustration. He was well aware that he was speaking on the unpopular side of the subject, but the truth must be told. The only safe kind of charity, the only species of charity that was not liable to abuse, was an hospital for accidents. Accidents were things that no man could calculate upon or provide against, and of this they might be certain, that the existence of such an hospital would in no way tend to increase the number of accidents. The next charity in point of safety was that of dispensaries. He would pause, however, before he would go so far as to say that that was a safe species of charity, not liable to abuse. He had been of such an opinion some years back, but upon consideration he had altered it. Every one should look forward to, and provide against, that sickness, those ailments to which the lives of all were necessarily exposed. Though he did not go the extent of



objecting to dispensaries, therefore, he doubted much that their establishment was in accordance with sound principle. But when he came to the third species of charity, that which went to support the aged and the infirm, he would say that it was against all sound principle. The worst of the system was, that it necessarily sinned in every respect against principle. The establishment of foundling hospitals, for instance, what can be more pernicious than such establishments? What more opposed to sound principles? He was glad, however, that the enlightened spirit of the present times had got rid of that evil of the system. The Foundling Hospital in Guildford-street, which had been long regarded as one of the ornaments of the metropolis, had in reality not deserved the name for the last seventy years. Not a single foundling could be admitted there now. The same improvement had been effected with regard to the Foundling Hospital in Dublin, by his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Control (Mr. C. Grant), when he filled the office of Secretary for Ireland. But the great, the grand violation of all sound principle, consisted in the system which went to support the idle and the profligate, at the expense of the honest and industrious. There was no doubt as to the lamentable consequences which such a system had produced. It led, amongst other bad consequences, to the act of 1796, commonly called the Allowance Act, which provided for the support of the poor by the part payment of their wages out of the poor-rates. The effect of that pernicious act was, that numbers paid for labour that they did not want, and that equally great numbers paid for labour who did not want labour at all. That system was brought on by the scarcity of 1795, and it was greatly increased by the scarcity in 1800 and 1801. Did not their lordships see the evils which such a system had produced? It was surely unnecessary for him to go into a detail of those evils. (Hear). He had known but two excuses ever made for this pernicious system, and it was only necessary to state them to demonstrate their absurdity. The first was one which he remembered was stoutly maintained against him in the House of Commons by some worthy men, who had only regarded the subject locally, and who had not taken any large views of the workings of the system. They maintained that such a system tended to keep up the character of the labourers, that they received their allowance with the erect port and dignified aspect of men who knew that they were only claiming their just rights, that they took it as a thing which the law gave them, and to which they had as good a right as others had to their property. Alas! it was true that they demanded this allowance with an erect port, but was it not equally true that the character of the people had been lowered by this system? Formerly it was considered a shame and a disgrace, and something not less than criminal, to be a dependent upon the poor-rates. That

was the state of things when the peasantry of this country were really alive to those feelings of independence which had been extinguished by the operation of the poor-laws. There was no doubt that now they demanded the parochial allowance with an erect port and with a manly air, or rather it might be more truly said that they called for it with a sturdy gait, and he would not say with a manly, but with a masterful port. (Hear, hear). They asked for it not as men, but as masters, and it was well known that they actually domineered over the parochial officers. (Hear). Such a system, in truth, took away all sense of shame; it deprived men of all feelings of personal dignity, self-respect, and independence, and prevented them from seeking in the honourable paths of honest industry for the support of themselves and their families. It degraded their minds, it lowered their characters, it was a system vicious in action, as well as bad in principle. (Hear, hear). The second defence of this system proceeded from some learned persons who were great friends to pure and strict principles in political science, who were exceedingly rigorous in establishing their points of distinction, who laid down their general principles of political economy with so strictly defined a rule, that they even stated Irish absenteeism to be a benefit to the country, who followed up a principle not only to the straining but to the cracking of it; these learned persons, he had said, had exhibited the second defence of this system, and what was it? It was this, they said that the effect of the poor-laws was to afford a check to the increase of the population. They maintained that it was impossible to interfere by legislation to prevent improvident marriages. He admitted the fact. They then maintained, that as the principle of population was always to increase, the poor-laws furnished the only check to that increase. But were those learned persons so short-sighted, and they were learned and far-seeing persons, as not to see that whatever little check the poor-laws in one respect imposed upon the increase of the population, was immeasurably counterbalanced by the greatest incentive that the wit of man could devise, by the most wilful and direct encouragement that possibly could have been discovered, which was afforded by the present poor-law system to improvident marriages? That was, in fact, the corner-stone of this most pernicious of all systems. He did not think that the whole history of human error and credulity could parallel the error into which those learned persons had thus fallen. The language which the poor-laws held to the poor was, "Contract marriages if you please, and your children shall be supported at the expense of the parish." Was not that a direct encouragement to the poor man to contract an imprudent marriage, instead of waiting to marry until he should be able to support himself and his family? He had adverted to the evils of this system, and to the maladministration of the poor-laws; he would

now call their lordships' attention to the results of that system. In doing so, it would be necessary for him to refer to a body of evidence the largest, the most comprehensive, the most important, and the most interesting that perhaps had ever been collected upon any subject. He would, however, before he should go to that point, as he was on the subject of population, step aside for a moment to do justice to a most learned, able, and virtuous individual, whose name had been pursued by the deepest, and he was sorry to say in many instances by the most wilful misrepresentation, that any man of science had ever been subjected to. The individual to whom he alluded, who had been made the subject of the most fierce and ignorant attacks; who had also been maligned and misrepresented by those who should have known better; that individual was distinguished by his amiable feelings and virtues in private life. Not only was he the ornament of that scientific society in which he moved, but he was the delight and the ornament of every private social circle in which he mingled. It was scarcely necessary for him to say to them that the individual to whom he was alluding was one than whom the church of England did not possess a brighter character—the *Rev. Mr. Malthus*. (Hear). Those whose ignorance only afforded their excuse, and those who could not make that plea in their defence, had made the most malignant attacks upon the character of an individual who had made some of the greatest additions that ever had been made to the science of political philosophy; a discovery, than which he would venture to say no man of science had ever made a greater. He was now about to call their lordships' attention to the practical working of the present system, and to the remedy which it was proposed to apply to the evils that had arisen out of it. There was no more important event in the recent history of the Government of this country than the issuing of the poor-law commission. He certainly was one of those who at first thought that the documents they already possessed, the body of evidence which been collected by committees of both Houses, were quite sufficient to enable them to come to a proper consideration of the subject. However, on reflection, he altered that opinion, and the result of the inquiries of the commissioners, and the immense body of practical evidence which they had gathered together, fully bore him out in that change of opinion. He would venture to say that there was no person who had read the valuable labours of the commissioners but must be persuaded that a more important, a more interesting, or a more universally comprehensive mass of evidence and information, had never before been brought together on any one subject. It was impossible for him to speak in terms of sufficient praise of the ability and zeal with which the commissioners had discharged the important duty confided to them. He believed that no better individuals could be se-

lected for the discharge of that duty than the two first persons named in it, the two right reverend prelates, whose absence on this occasion in consequence of their attendance to their episcopal duties, he had so much reason to lament. Another of those commissioners was *Mr. S. Bourne*, than whom no one better qualified could possibly have been selected to fill such situation. (Hear, hear). He might add to those names that of *Professor Senior*, whose learning and talents were well known to the country. There were others in the commission whom he (the Lord Chancellor) had not known before they had been placed there, and of whose talents he had not been aware until they were displayed in that report; he alluded to *Mr. Coulson*, *Mr. Chadwick*, and *Mr. Bishop*. They had all displayed great talents in the discharge of their duties. No person, indeed, could read the report of *Mr. Chadwick* without being intimately persuaded of his fitness for the office, and without being filled with admiration of his talents. He (the Lord Chancellor) had risen from the perusal of *Mr. Chadwick's* report,—of that admirable composition, displaying as it did, on the part of the author, the possession of every species of talent,—he had risen, he repeated, from the perusal of that admirable composition, with a degree of admiration that he found it difficult, nay, impossible, to express. He had risen from the perusal of the report of the commissioners with the most painful impression on his mind. It was impossible for any one to peruse it without entertaining the same feeling,—without being impressed with the same impression,—and without being convinced, however he might have been previously under the illusion that the state of his fellow-countrymen was happy and prosperous, that the mass of the lower classes of this country were fast sinking into the lowest depths of degradation and misery, the fruits of that system which it was now for the first time attempted to remedy in an effectual manner. Without going into detail, he would merely mention those facts illustrative of that statement, under a few general heads, without annexing any observations to them, conceiving that they required none. In the first instance, then, they had the constant and almost regular practice to be found in every part of the country, in districts agricultural, manufacturing, and even commercial, in parishes with people, in parishes with a scarcity of people, and in parishes where there was hardly any population at all; in all those different and divers places they found the practice established of able-bodied men preferring a small pittance from the parish, and the living in idleness, to a larger sum in the shape of wages, accompanied with the necessity of working for their support. In more than one or two places they were found to prefer a pittance of 3s. 6d. to wages much higher in amount, and their reason was that that pittance was a certainty, and that they could receive it and be always idle. But



were they always idle? (Hear, hear). Were not those persons who were thus supported by the parish in idleness always the greatest workers of mischief in the country? (Hear). It was bad enough to pay them 3s. 6d. a week for living in idleness, but it was still worse when such characters were always found, if not the ringleaders, the ready followers in every mischief, in every depredation, and in every villany that was perpetrated in their neighbourhood. This practice was not confined to lazy rustics in the agricultural districts, but the very boatmen on the Kentish coast, they who formerly would, even in the worst weather, risk their lives for the purpose of procuring support for their wives and families, would not now go out in winter, and their statement was, they would go out no more in winter, but that the parish must support them—that they had a right to that support. Then those persons who were supported by the parish, when they were obliged to work, complained if they were made to work as much as independent labourers. In fact, in one or two cases there had been appeals to the magistrates from the overseers, on the ground that they had made the parish paupers work as much as the labourers, who received no support from the parish. (Hear, hear). Things like that almost baffled credulity. Another fact which their lordships would find established in the report of the commissioners was, that in many places those who received parish relief, and those who were employed by the parish, were better off, considerably better off, in point of wages, than the honest industrious labourer who endeavoured to support himself by his own efforts. The disproportion was especially great in some parts of Sussex and in the Isle of Wight. There it appeared 10s. a week was given to the paupers for working a certain number of hours in the day, while the independent labourers, who worked for a much longer time, received only 12s. a week. In fact, it appeared, that in the Isle of Wight 240 pauper labourers struck because they were obliged to work as long as other labourers, and for less wages; and they, after almost resorting to force, succeeded in obtaining compliance with their demands. He did not blame those men—he blamed the bad laws which produced such pernicious effects. Then came a still worse principle, if possible, of the present system. The law of nature ordained that a man should support his child—that a son should support his parents—that those who were better off in the world than their other relations should give them aid and assistance; but this law stepped in and told them to do no such thing, for that it would take that duty upon itself. What was the effect of the law? It denaturalized men, and made them act in a way that they otherwise never would have dreamt of—it made them say, as men had been known to say, “I will expose my children in the streets unless you order me relief for them.” “I will turn my mother out of the house and place her at the

overseer's door, unless you give me relief for her.” Those who framed the act of Elizabeth were not aware of that principle as to population, with regard to which Malthus had since enlightened mankind. Those who framed that act which commenced the foundation of a system that separated labour from its rewards, seeing no doubt what would be the effect of such a system, laid an obligation on the child to support his aged parent. If we looked at the consequences of all this *on the property* of the country, they were to the full as melancholy as any other of the ill effects flowing from the maladministration of the poor-laws. He would not say that many farms were deserted, and many parishes given up to waste, for want of occupants (he certainly knew of one or two farms and one parish, in [we believe] Wiltshire, which were in that condition),—but he was satisfied that the system had a tendency to that point,—that we were approaching with rapid strides, and must reach that precipice ere long (hear),—and that the fact of one parish being thrown out of cultivation directly and inevitably tended to throw three or four others into waste. (Hear). He felt persuaded that stand where we now were we could not—that the question was, should we retrace our steps, to be pushed and hurried on by the accelerating and descending impetus of the weight of the present system? That such was our position, that such was the course we were pursuing, that such was the gulf towards which we were approaching, no man living, gifted with an ordinary measure of sagacity, could deny. Such was the picture, harsh in its outline, gloomy in its colouring, and in feature and in aspect awful to behold. Such was the picture menacing the safety of society and the security of property, *which the present system as at present administered* offered to the view. We had, by our legislation, and by our administration of the law, attempted to reverse the primal curse pronounced upon man, that he should eat his bread in the sweat of his brow. The poor-laws, as now administered, had said that sweat should trickle from the brow no more; but they had not reversed the residue of the curse—in sorrow shalt thou eat thy bread, for the idleness which the system encouraged and perpetuated carried its own punishment along with it. Providence, in pronouncing on the human race the original curse, bountifully compensated the sufferings of labour by the pleasures and blessings inseparable from industry, which sweetened the coarsest morsel and softened the hardest pillow; but of such pleasures and blessings the pauper, by a monstrous anomaly and the maladministration of a defective system, was utterly deprived. By this most strange and monstrous anomaly the pauper was tormented with all the ills, not of poverty, but of riches—all the evils, not of labour, but of pampered idleness—with that hypochondriasis, which, in palaces, arose from a want of occupation, and formed the greatest curse of wealth. The evidence would

prove that the pauper spent his days in lounging about idle, half asleep during one part, whole asleep during the remainder part of the day, and sleepless at night, in consequence of the idleness of his day. Industry, which was the greatest preservative from the dominion of impure passions and wrong deeds, was wanting; and the consequence was, want of chastity, child murder, and the long catalogue of crimes which deformed our calendars, in despite of improvements in education and other favourable circumstances. There was but one considerable exception to the evil, and that might be found in the seats of manufacture, which displayed the great triumphs of arts and industry, and their blessings, of which it had been said that their lineage was high and noble, for they were the children of science, and the progeny was as useful as their origin was respectable, for they became the parents of wealth. Those worthy arts, and the great manufacturing towns which were their seats, furnished almost the only instance of resistance to the tide that was overflowing us; but in vain might you expect to find that resistance continued if the flood were allowed to roll on unchecked; in vain might you expect to see Manchester, and Leeds, and Birmingham, flourish as oases in the desert, while all the rest of the land was overspread with the consequences of the present system. It now behoved us, before all were contaminated, and one common ruin involved us, all, to make a stand—to retrace our steps, and seek to stay the destruction which was on the wing, and at our door. This led him to ask their lordships' attention to the cause of the mischiefs which he had pointed out. He should say nothing at present of repealing the poor-law itself—he should take it as being fixedly and irrevocably the law of the land, and he should take it for granted that it was impossible to reduce things to their state previous, he would not say to the 43., but the 4. of Elizabeth: however desirable it might be to see the system on a better footing, and impossible as it was not to wish for some improvement, it was difficult to effect it, because it was the evil of all bad laws being worse administered, that we must continue to bear them, on account of the dangers that would arise from suddenly discontinuing them. However, much might be done in the way of amending the administration of the law; and in that respect practical wisdom required the application of a remedy. The separate and opposite jurisdictions of different magistrates, overseers, and benches of justices on appeal—the want of system and unity in practice were at the root of the whole evil, and the report teemed with instances of the mischief that arose in this way. When you looked at the cases in which a better system of administration had been adopted, you would hardly think you were in the same county; a total change was effected, the rates came down to one-half, and afterwards one-third, of what they had been before,—paupers disappeared, and in-

dusty returned. The good effects of salutary caution were evident in Scotland. In that country lawyers doubted, up to rather a recent period, whether there existed a right of compulsory assessment. It was now agreed that there did, and the English and Scotch laws were admitted to rest on the same foundation; but the administration was very different in the two countries. The Scotch, a careful and prudent people, did all they could to avoid assessments, and reserved their efforts for times of extraordinary scarcity, such as occurred in 1795 and 1803. A like practice should be enforced in England. The eyes of the people should be opened to the abuses of the present system, and they would then see the propriety of an alteration. This was one great reason for calling for a central, vigorous, and uniform system of administration. It was said, "How much better was the principle of leaving the administration of affairs as much as possible in the hands of the people." Generally speaking, he was willing to admit the soundness of this principle and practice, which was not only beneficial in its effects, but was also the foundation of good legislative measures and a preventive of bad; but, nevertheless, experience showed that the principle was not universally applicable. When a certain leaven of men got into a body or assembly, and the habit of bad management arose, it was difficult to root it out, and the evil often baffled the love of the general interest, and set it at defiance. It was given in evidence before the education committee, that in a town where there were one or two great charities supported without endowment by voluntary contributions, Baron Bayley, himself a large contributor to the charities, proposed that no tradesmen on the committees of management should be employed in supplying the institutions, because it was apprehended that where such persons were interested there would be no strict auditing of accounts, and too much of the commodities which they supplied might be furnished. Nevertheless, this proposition, though meant to save the funds, which were voluntarily contributed, was rejected by a great majority of the parties who subscribed to the charity. This was the case in one charity: and with respect to the other, there was a by-law that no man should be employed as a tradesman to the charity while on the committee; but the check was defeated by having a double set of bakers, butchers, and others, who sat upon the committee in alternate years, and were employed by turns as they went out of office. An alteration of this system was absolutely refused. The parties said, "Oh, we are very honest men and don't mean to rob the poor" (by the way, if any body was robbed it was the rich, who contributed the funds)—"we don't mean to rob the poor, but we will continue to supply the charity." Now, though there might be no robbery, probably there was a little cheating in the plan—at least things thus furnished might be charged rather high,



and extravagantly supplied. Did not this show how long a bad system might prevail even against the interest of the general body, when it contributed to the advantage of certain individuals? How long might a bad system prevail in every vestry and parish in England before men's eyes were opened—ay, and after they had been opened! (Hear). He was not now speaking of a few ignorant farmers, who, by the way, had not such a strong interest in the question as the landlords (hear), but of more enlightened persons and places, less open to speculation than mere country parishes. Therefore the evils of a scattered and varying and uncertain administration it behoved Parliament above all things to remedy, with the view to do away with the want of proper bodies to overlook the expenditure and employment of the poor. For this object the bill provided by a better arrangement than at present existed. It being clear that the principle of amendment ought to be grounded on this method of leaving the law, generally speaking, as it stood at present, but retracing our steps as far as we could towards a due administration, and having brought that nearer to what it was in some particular parishes where improvements had been made, and to its state in Scotland, then it became the duty of the legislature to take such steps in reference to the law as would prevent a recurrence to similar abuses. "Now," continued the noble and learned lord, "I entreat your lordships' attention to the course taken in constructing the measure before you; but I wish to advert in the outset of my remarks on this head to the principal objection to this plan—an objection, however, which has been more heard of out of doors than within the walls of Parliament. The objection in question is that the plan has been framed by theorists and visionaries, and, to sum up all in one word, political economists, which is the climax and grand term of reproach, as if only theorists and visionaries could be students and professors of the despised science of political economy. Why, my lords, some of the most eminent practical men—individuals the most esteemed and celebrated, not as rash and dreaming theorists, but as sober statesmen,—leaders of opposition, ministers and heads of cabinets, men whose names have passed after death into epithets equivalent with wisdom,—some of those I should name, if called upon to point out the greatest cultivators of political economy that have flourished in my own day. Is it necessary for me to remind your lordships that Adam Smith—another name which excites a sneer or a titter sometimes in public and private, but only among the grovelling ignorant—that the name of that eminent economist was first made generally known by means of his intimacy with Mr. Pitt, and by Mr. Pitt quoting him in Parliament? Mr. Pitt was distinguished by his acquaintance with political economy, though he did not always proceed on sound principles, or apply

his principles, if less faulty, with success—at least such is my opinion, now speaking after the event with the wisdom which experience affords, but still always speaking with respect for that eminent person's science and talents, which no man, how rude or ignorant soever, will be found bold enough to question or deny. I think Mr. Pitt committed mistakes—perhaps in his situation I should have committed such myself; but was he a dreamer or visionary? Was Mr. Canning, who also professed and practised the science of political economy, a philosopher, a mere speculator, or a visionary? I have heard many persons object to Mr. Canning's policy. I did so myself at one period, though latterly I found reason to support him, but neither at one period of his political life nor at another do I ever recollect hearing anybody sufficiently bold or foolish to designate him as a visionary, or too much of a theorist in politics. Then there was Mr. Huskisson—he was a political economist, but I suppose it will not be denied that he was also a practical man. I suppose he knew nothing of trade and commerce—of the manufacturing and mercantile relations of the country—of the disposition of wealth—of the effect of laws and fiscal regulations on trade and commerce! I verily believe, my lords, that if I were to search the whole of our annals and all England through for a practical statesman, who always attended to what he thought sound and incontestable principles, and was invariably guided by the results of experience—a pilot who in steering the vessel of the state proceeded with greater skill and caution according to the best ascertained charts, holding the lead and plummet in his hand, taking soundings ahead and around—if I were to seek for and name such a man, the individual whose name I should pronounce would be Mr. Huskisson. There was Mr. Henry Thornton, a political economist and a writer of great name and reputation, whose works have enlightened us in no ordinary degree. I refer to Mr. Thornton the banker, whose opinions on political economy were grounded on the same source as Mr. Huskisson's, and followed out with equal vigour and decision; and it is such men as Huskisson, Pitt, Canning, Dr. Smith, and others of that school, that I now hear derided as economists? And is a science cultivated by Turgot, Condorcet, and other eminent French economists, a proper subject for contempt? To my utter surprise, and astonishment, and admiration, I find that in the minds of some ignorant and presumptuous persons it is. The ignorance of such persons, like their presumption, has no bounds, for ignorance has no limits, though unhappily, my lords, science has—ignorance is infinite and inexhaustible, ever new and inventive, but, unlike science, its inventions are of no advantage to society—ignorance excites, if not our admiration, our astonishment, but that astonishment is mingled with pity and contempt; ignorance is indeed astonishing, and never was it more daring in its inroads

on our credulity, or more presumptuous, than on the present occasion, when it causes little, but much-assuming, men, dressed in a little brief authority, or desiring authority, or wishing to pass for persons in authority, and decked with infinite presumption—I say nothing is more astonishing than to hear such individuals talk with contempt of the French economists, as blind, republican, and revolutionary. Now, every one, except those ignorant persons, knows that the French economists lived under a despotism, and abhorred liberty—that they loved absolute power and extolled a *despotisme légal*—that they said the best form of government in the world was an absolute monarchy, with a good king at the head of it: to which, by the way, it was answered, “Yes, if you are always sure of a good king, no matter what may be your laws; but you can make sure of the one, and not of the other.” But enough of this: what I have said clearly and undeniably shows the folly and ignorance of calling the French economists republicans, and it as plainly proves that the object was to give a certain science and its professors a bad name, but that those who thus fling about their slanders do not know the meaning of the words they use. Therefore, my lords, instead of its being any objection to me that the great mass of valuable and important information on which we go all proceeds from political economists, who have devoted themselves to the study of that useful and practical science, that is my chief reliance in this matter, and I expose myself cheerfully along with the great names of the dead whom I have mentioned, and of the living whom I forbear to mention, to the charge of belonging to the band of visionary speculatists who appeal to facts and papers and documents, in which more confidence is placed, because they proceed on scientific principles. Through the documents laid before us we have carefully picked our way, and we have not recklessly or inconsiderately adopted every suggestion made to us: on the contrary, we have rejected one-half the suggestions of the commissioners, not that we disapproved of many of them, so much as because we thought it better in a practical point of view to leave them out for the present; but hereafter, when time shall have been allowed for trial and consideration, should they prove successful, they will receive my assent. Parts of the measure we have taken on the suggestion of the commissioners; other and considerable portions on the credit of facts and experience. Their lordships would collect his opinion as to the true way of reforming the administration of the poor-laws from what he had already stated. First, he was of opinion, and he trusted he had shown, that there ought to be such a unity in the power vested in certain hands for the superintendence of the administration of the poor-laws, as could only be attained by the establishment of one central control. It next followed that the individuals to exercise this control ought to be unpolitical persons (hear), members of neither

House of Parliament, not selected for party purposes, and wholly unconnected with the contests that arose in the state. This was his fixed opinion, and if he were consulted on the choice of such persons, he would say, “Show me a man, whose opinions on party matters differ from mine, and if he is a individual of a firm mind, of knowledge, experience, conciliatory manners, and good temper, as well as learning, I shall not hesitate to prefer him rather than persons of inferior qualifications, but with whom I happen to agree in politics.” (Hear). And if he saw two persons equally gifted with the necessary qualifications, but of opposite political opinions, he should be anxious, with a view to gain the public confidence, to make choice of one individual from one side, and of a second from the other. The reform in the administration of the law which was so much to be desired could be effected only by intrusting discretionary powers in the commissioners, and those powers must be large, or else no good could result from their exercise. If every time that a step too ample or too limited should be taken, you had to wait till Parliament could be called together to adjust the matter, it would be vain to hope for the amendment that was required. You might commit an error in an act of Parliament, a serious but not incorrigible error, so long as you vested a discretionary power somewhere to amend it; but if you must wait till you could obtain a new act of Parliament to correct the mistake, very serious consequences might arise. The law would require to be applied according to the circumstances of particular places; for instance, the circumstances of a manufacturing parish might be very different from those of an agricultural parish, and diversities would occur between parishes of the same class, whether manufacturing or agricultural, which particulars must be taken into account on the application of the law. At present the law applied to all parishes equally, and in its letter at least was not flexible; but when the same rule was applied to all parishes, the circumstances of one parish necessarily made it more binding than the circumstances of another. Now, as the law did not make any difference in those circumstances, and as it was evident that a discretion must be lodged somewhere, he had no hesitation in saying that the powers given to the commissioners must be discretionary, must be arbitrary; for he would use that word, as it had been used against him in attack, and must be of an enlarged description. He was aware that these powers might be unconstitutional, he was aware, at all events, that they were novel; but as to their being novel altogether, that he had some hesitation in affirming. They were novel as conferred upon a central board; but in the first 50 private poor-law acts that were to be found in the statute-book, he would undertake to show that there were powers more drastic, more rigorous, more arbitrary, and more unconstitutional, conferred in one and all of



them upon the commissioners appointed to carry them into effect, than were to be found in this bill appointing a central board. The grand difference between those private poor-law acts and this bill was, that the powers granted under the former were powers conferred upon persons likely to abuse them—upon persons chosen in a corner, acting in the dark, never coming before the face of the country, not responsible to the legislature, not removeable by the Crown, not having to give into any Secretary of State an account of their conduct. Could their lordships, who had given such powers to such persons, hesitate to give them to commissioners elected as these commissioners were to be elected, and acting under all the responsibilities to which they were rendered liable? He had now shown how the evil of the present system operated. He had pointed out the manner in which its cure was to be effected. The board was to be central for the sake of unity—it was to consist of unpolitical persons—it was to have discretionary power—and it was to use this discretionary power in the face of Parliament and of the country, and under the liability of being removeable at the pleasure of the Crown. He had thus stated the four principal features to which their lordships ought to direct their attention in looking at this central board. They were the provisions by which he proposed to regulate that board, to which, indeed, there was to be added another, that when any general order was made by the board, it was not to have force until it was communicated to the Secretary of State, and until forty days had elapsed from the date of that communication without its receiving any countermand. Let their lordships take into their consideration the positive control thus exercised over the Central Board—let them add to it the control exercised over it by public opinion, and by the watchful superintendence of Parliament; and then they would see that the powers granted to it were placed under sufficient restrictions, and were well guarded even against the possibility of abuse. Still, however, it was said that these powers were unconstitutional, that they were as novel as they were unwelcome to the country. "But, my lords," continued the Lord Chancellor, "if this be an extraordinary measure to which we have recourse, if it be an unheard-of measure which we are enacting, are the times in which we live of an ordinary aspect? Is the occasion in which we are called to legislate one which has oftentimes existed before? Is there no unheard-of evil pressing upon us at present, compelling us to such a step, and justifying the step which it compels us to take? I have seen other bills of a more unconstitutional nature, where powers equally large, if not much larger, were conferred upon persons elected in the dark, whose responsibility was merely nominal, and, in point of fact, amounted to nothing at all. But, my lords, we live not in the times in which such bills were passed; we live in times very different; we live at a

period when a report is presented to us full of facts and arguments, founded upon the concurrent testimony of magistrates, clergymen, country gentlemen, farmers, and labourers—of manufacturers and tradesmen—of men of science and no science at all—of men of practical knowledge and of theoretical principles—of the dwellers in the town and the dwellers in the country—of those who have carried on the affairs of parish vestries as churchwardens, overseers, and vestrymen—and of those who have all their lives been engaged in administering or in witnessing the administration of the poor-laws as baristers, magistrates, and judges. Talk to me of unheard-of measures and of unconstitutional powers in a case like this, when you have before you such a report as I have described to you, filled with a mass of unparalleled, unprecedented, consentaneous, uncontradicted testimony, borne by every description of witnesses in every class of life, and sanctioned by every variety of talent and ability that can be found in judicial minds,—confirmed and corroborated by all those who are the best authorities in matters of opinion, and the best witnesses in matters coming within their own experience, all in one voice uniting in representing to your lordships a state of things existing in the country, which has made industry and idleness, honesty and knavery, shift their places, and which exposes the property of the country, and not only the property of the country, but every one of its most valuable institutions, to waste and ruin, and which, above all—for that is the corner stone of the social edifice, and it is not for your lordships, as landed proprietors, that I feel alarm, or that I call upon you to feel alarm yourselves, but as guardians of the social happiness of those who live under your protection, on your estates, and in your tenements—which, above all, I repeat, has reduced your peasantry to a state of abasement which I am ashamed to think of, which I shudder to describe, and which I could not for a single moment have the hardihood and heart to contemplate, were I not in my conscience convinced that the same daring hand which has laid bare the appalling nature of the disease, the naked deformity of the evil, is able to apply to it a safe, a certain, and an effectual remedy, which will restore to industry its proper reward, and visit idleness with its appropriate punishment; which will reinstate property in security, and will lift up once more to a condition, to which God be praised we may still hope to live to see it exalted, the character of that noble English peasantry which, had your bad poor-laws and their still worse administration allowed it to remain untarnished, would have still been, as I trust ere long to behold it again, the admiration of the world and the glory of the country." (Hear, hear.) The noble and learned lord then proceeded to say, that there were other alterations and improvements made in the law by this bill; but, exhausted as their patience must be, and exhausted as he himself was, by the statement

which he had already made, he should not trespass much longer upon their indulgence. Out of the poor-laws of Queen Elizabeth, which gave every man a claim upon some parish or other, arose the necessity for the law of settlement. His hope was, that owing to the alteration which this bill would produce in the state of the country, another half century would not elapse without our being able to make still further improvements than those which were now contemplated in the law of settlement. The present bill avoids the question of settlement by birth, and makes no change in that part of our law. He had great hopes that the improvements which the other alterations in the present code of poor-laws would introduce into England would enable their lordships, at no very distant time, to make still further improvements in it; but at present he thought that it would be going too fast if they were to make the place of birth the place of settlement. That proposition had been made and considered in the other House of Parliament, and had been rejected. He thought that the proposition was a very important one; but he would not press it upon their lordships, though he should be very ready, if any noble lord thought fit, to discuss it with him in the committee. Under the law on this point, as it existed at present, a person might be made chargeable upon a parish which had no control whatever over his proceedings. "For instance," said the noble and learned lord, "suppose that I am a Westmoreland pauper, as I soon shall be, if this system is allowed to go on (a laugh),—suppose that I go and live in Northamptonshire, where, however, I am not allowed to gain a settlement,—suppose that I there make a most improvident marriage, and have as many children as fall to the lot of a man at my time of life. I have, it may be, fifteen or sixteen children (a laugh)—that is, I mean to say, supposing that I am only eighteen; supposing that the lady was in that situation before marriage which gave her a claim upon me, I might be compelled by the oversees to contract a marriage with her. That is, be it recollected, in Northamptonshire. Those churchwardens in Northamptonshire who can compel me to marry, and those landlords in Northamptonshire who refuse to let me a 10<sup>l</sup>. tenement, and those farmers in Northamptonshire who refuse me a hiring by the year, but allow me to have a family in one of their smallest cottages, have the power to let me gain, but have no interest in my gaining a settlement among them. Indeed they have an interest quite another way—they have a direct interest in increasing the number of paupers who are to burden the rates of the Westmoreland parish. Now, making the place of settlement the place of birth would put a stop to all this, for if my fifteen or sixteen children had a birth settlement in Northamptonshire, the churchwardens in Northamptonshire would not compel me to a marriage, nor would the farmers encourage me to settle in

their cottages, nor would the landlords refuse to let me a 10<sup>l</sup>. house." The noble and learned lord, after dwelling upon this point for some time longer, but in an exhausted tone of voice, which, during the remainder of his speech, rendered him almost inaudible in the gallery, and prevented us from catching more than detached sentences of his speech, proceeded to observe that there came next a point on which he believed that all their lordships were agreed. The settlement by hiring was exploded by this bill, as sinning against every principle. The consequence of the law giving a settlement to every person hired by the year, was, at first a perpetual attempt to invade the law, which, from its tendency to weaken the general respect which ought to prevail for the law, was in itself an evil of no small magnitude. Then it created hostility between the master and the man, the one attempting to gain a settlement, and the other attempting to fend him off; and thus it happened that of late years the masters and their men were no longer on the friendly footing on which they were before the year 1792. Then it led to the discontinuance of boarding farm servants in the house of the master of the farm. Whilst that custom continued the master and his servants were on the most friendly terms with each other. The master was considered as the head of the family and the servants were considered as the children of it. He had often seen them dine together at the same table, and a better dinner needed not be set before any person of unpampered appetite. There was thus a domestic control exercised over the men-servants by the master, and a moral sanction over the maid-servants by the superintendence of the matron of the family. When the promptings of nature induced their servants to marry, the master and mistress severally put before the servant of their respective sexes the imprudence, the misery, the dishonesty, and he would even say the wickedness, of marrying before they were provided with the means of supporting a family. Thus the common sense of these honest, but uneducated people, suggested that preventive check which Malthus had incurred so much obloquy for mentioning in his philosophy. There were, in consequence, very few marriages, and bastardy was not one-twentieth part so common as now. But there was another evil arising out of this settlement by hiring to which he wished to call attention. When all the farm servants were turned out of the house, and compelled to spend their time at the ale-house, to which they seldom went before, except upon occasion of high holidays, the consequence was, that pauperism increased with frightful rapidity, and that a great and unfortunate stimulus was given to the progress of population. But the law of settlement by hiring had a tendency in another way to injure the moral habits and the moral character of servants. To prevent them gaining a settlement by a hiring for the year, the masters generally turned them off



for a fortnight before the close of the year. They were thus fourteen days out of employment, and during that time they were in the general habit of running about to different fairs and markets. That was the result of his experience in the north of England, and he believed that the experience of their lordships in the south would not be very different. It was a notorious and well-known fact, that more servants were corrupted and rendered bad members of society in that fortnight than under any other circumstances which were calculated to deprave and ruin the human character. If this system was so bad for the men, it was still worse for the women-servants. Take the case of a young girl, who was either forty or fifty miles from the home of her father and mother, or who, from the death of her parents, had no home to which she could resort. She goes, it may be, from one fair to another; she has thus every chance of losing her character, and therefore it was that he rejoiced exceedingly that this bill contained a provision for abolishing the settlement by hiring. The abolition of the settlement by apprenticeship was also a salutary provision, but was not so important as that relating to the abolition of the settlement by hiring. All the other modes of acquiring a settlement remained as they were, with the exception of that arising from the hiring of a 10*l*. settlement, on which, as their lordships would find, some restrictions had been placed. He now came to the change which it was proposed to make in the laws relating to bastardy. He thought that that change was a bold measure, but at the same time he thought it was a great and undeniable improvement. The law, as it now stood, threw it upon the man to avoid the offence, and visited him with penalties if he committed it. The law appeared also to leave the woman without any inducement to join in the commission of it: but, in point of fact, it did not leave her without that inducement. It raised up a motive, and it co-operated with the frailty of the flesh against her virtue. The man found one enemy in the woman's breast to beat a parley in his favour, and that was her passions (hear, hear); and then, when the parley was beaten, he found another enemy ready to recommend a surrender, and that was not her passions, but her calculations. (Hear). Then came the suggestions,—“The law is in my favour, if the worst comes to the worst, I can make him marry me; I am not doing that which is wrong in itself, provided marriage follows.” And then came in thoughts of a warmer nature, and sensations which overpower the woman when her passions are strong, and all that is wanted is a soporific to lull her conscience. The law furnished that soporific by enabling her to look forward to a period when marriage would cover her fault. She thus listened to her calculations, and gratified her passions by surrendering the citadel. He should describe this conflict of passion, and calculation, and chastity no further. Indeed, it was unneces-

sary to carry the discussion on that point further. The change of the law which he now called upon their lordships to make was founded on the same principles on which their lordships were accustomed to legislate every day in cases of applications which came before them in consequence of conjugal infirmities. How often had he heard it argued before their lordships that the husband and the wife ought in such cases to be placed on a par!—that the wife should have the same right to sue the husband that the husband now has to sue the wife, and that the civil law should be introduced into this country for the better protection of female comfort and female honour? “No,” their lordships had also answered, and in the propriety of that answer he fully concurred, “we will not trust the keeping of a woman's virtue to herself. To her apply the threats which are to deter from crime; to her apply the menaces which are to prevent her backsliding. If she will not yield of herself, and if you can make it her interest not to yield upon the solicitations of others, the seducer will beat at the door in vain, his object will be frustrated, and yours will be gained.” (Hear, hear). Let this principle be applied to the law of bastardy, let the woman be deprived of the advantage which she possesses at present, let the disadvantage be placed on her side, and the man will have less chance to seduce her from the path of chastity and virtue. (Hear). He had now gone through all the points of the bill which he deemed important. He had already detained their lordships too long, indeed much longer than he had originally intended. “In conclusion,” continued his lordship, “I must say that I have not intruded at this length upon your lordships, owing to any seductions or attractions with which this painful and thorny subject is invested; it has not been owing to any delight which I have felt in contemplation of scenes which are honourable to no party; neither to our ancestors, who framed the original poor-laws, nor to their successors, who made those laws worse by their amendments than they found them; nor to us who have lived so long without attempting to improve them. It has not been owing, I say, to any delight which I have experienced in dwelling upon events and abuses which have taken place in no other country but England. It has been from a conscientious sense of public duty that I have represented to you these scenes, and furnished you with a picture which, gloomy as it is, is still a faithful and accurate picture of the state of the country. I have vanquished the reluctance, the natural reluctance, which I felt, and which operated upon me so strongly, that I never felt so much relieved in my life as I did the other night, when my noble Friend lately at the head of the Government declared his intention of bringing this subject before your lordships. I confess to your lordships that I should have felt it my duty, having borne a part in former efforts to amend the poor-laws; having in the years 1817 and 1818 ori-

ginated a bill which pointed at the reformation of those laws; having afterwards in the year 1830, when I was first called upon to take a part in the administration, zealously turned my mind to this question, and having been directed from it subsequently only by that question which absorbed the interest of all others, I mean the question of reform; having in 1831 issued a commission under the great seal, which prevented me from continuing my efforts until its report was received; being, I say, connected in this manner, and for such a length of time with this great question, I should have felt it to be my bounden duty to lend my assistance to my noble Friend in his endeavours to pass this bill through your lordships' House. My mind, acquits me, I can assure your lordships, of all sinister motives in advocating this measure, of every desire to distinguish myself in carrying it through Parliament, of every the slightest wish to court for myself, or for those connected with me personally, or for those connected with me in office, any portion of popular favour and love. It is consolatory, however, to reflect that we have no obloquy to incur from any considerable portion of the country. We have only to incur the risk of misconception in some quarters, and misrepresentation in others; of the false direction of right feelings, and of the exaggerated views of ignorance, and it may be of malignity, which is worse than ignorance. We have set before ourselves no advantage, save that of coming before the country, and of challenging for ourselves, from all parties in the state, the respect which is due to Ministers who, in passing the path of duty, look neither to the right hand nor to the left; but, regardless of whom they may conciliate or whom they may irritate or alarm, hold up in their hands the result of their best efforts, and their matured deliberations to serve that people who have cordially and affectionately, and I may almost say unanimously, placed their confidence in them, resolved at all hazards to show to the people that at all times, and upon all subjects, they consult only its best interests, and look for no other reward than the approbation of their own consciences, and the honest verdict of the rational and enlightened part of the community. (Hear, hear). I now, my lords, move that this bill be read a second time.

Lord WYNFORD next addressed their lordships, but in a tone of voice which rendered much of what he said to be very indistinctly heard in the gallery. We understood him to ask their lordships whether, if the evils occasioned by the present maladministration of the poor-laws were so great as they were described to be in the eloquent speech of his noble Friend, there would be any inconvenience in postponing this bill to the next session of Parliament? The House of Commons had been occupied more than two months in discussing this bill in committee. Did their lordships fancy that they could give it an adequate discussion in the short space of a fort-

night, which was the longest period of time that they could bestow upon it at this late period of the session? By postponing the bill to next session, it would have time in the interim to circulate among the magistrates, the country gentlemen, and all the other parties who took an interest in the administration of the poor-laws. He was sure that their lordships must feel that it was impossible for them to pass this bill during the present session. It was a bill of such importance that if their lordships did justice to it they could attend to no other subject during the remainder of their deliberations. If it were postponed to the next session, and taken into consideration immediately after its commencement, it might come into execution quite as soon as it would do if passed now. After the careful deliberation which had been bestowed upon it in the other House of Parliament, he objected to any plan of hurrying it with indecent haste through that House. If it were so hurried, the people would say, "The Peers require no time to pass so odious a measure, though the Commons had devoted to it many days of deliberation. It was sent up to the Lords with a number of other bills. They consented to yield at once, and passed it in a blind confidence in the other House." His noble and learned Friend had assumed that all the evils now suffered by the poor arose from our bad poor-laws, and our still worse administration of them. Now, that was a wrong view of the subject. Many of the most pressing evils now endured by the poor had nothing to do with the poor-laws. In the evidence collected by the poor-law commissioners, more than 100 witnesses deposed that the administration of the poor-laws had not produced the evils felt by the poor. What had occurred to reduce that class to the extreme wretchedness which his noble and learned Friend had described? The causes were many and various. The currency question had operated injuriously on the poor; so had the alteration in the corn laws, so had the threats of altering them once more, inasmuch as they prevented the farmer from employing the requisite quantity of capital and labour on his land. With respect to the poor in actual employment, the reports of various parliamentary committees proved over and over again, that taking into consideration the present rate of wages and price of provisions, they never, at any previous period, were so well off. What, then, was the real evil under which our labourers were suffering? Want of employment. What was the remedy for it? To find employment. Did this bill find that employment for them? No such thing. It was the want of employment which generated indolence, and that again generated all that vice and misery on which his noble and learned Friend had so largely expatiated. The want of employment, however, did not arise from the poor-laws, but from the distressed state of the agriculturist. His noble and learned Friend had eulogized political economists. He (Lord Wynford) did



not mean to attack their principles, but this he must say, that their practice had done a great deal to bring the poor into distress, for it had driven the poor land out of cultivation, and by so doing had deprived large numbers of our peasantry of employment and subsistence. It was idle to talk of the distress of the poorer classes being brought about by the present state of our poor-laws. Their distress lay much deeper than that. Did not the noble and learned Lord on the woolsack take into his account the great increase of the population, and the consequent diminution of the means of employment? But then the noble and learned Lord said, that the great increase of population was one result of the present state of the poor-laws. Would that account for the still greater increase of the population in Ireland, where they had no poor-laws? The fact was, that the great pressure of distress felt from want of employment, and want of parochial relief in Ireland, was a cause of distress in this country, and one of the first steps to relieve the distress here should be some remedy which should find employment for, or give relief to, the Irish in their own country; for it would be impossible to keep the Irish labouring poor from coming over here, and as long as there was so extensive a competition for employment here, so long would there be many thrown on parochial relief. The want of employment at present was one of the great causes of the distress amongst our poor. Was there any thing in the bill which went to provide any remedy for this evil, or which in any way touched it? There was nothing whatever, and to hold out any hope of this kind to the public was a mere delusion. Then as to the "allowance" system, would that be checked by this measure? He was sure it would not, and he did not think that the framers of the bill themselves believed that it would, or if they did, what did they mean by the 49. clause, which gave to the commissioners a discretionary power of granting allowances in certain cases? The fact was, that the rate of wages in the country was in most instances too low, and if they should not be raised, if they should be even continued as they were at present, a peasant who had a large family, even though in employment, must starve if he did not receive something beyond what was the present price of his labour. The noble and learned Lord (the Lord Chancellor) had alluded in terms of becoming respect to Mr. Pitt, and to his plans for the relief of the poor. Those plans, though defective in many respects, were superior to that of the bill now before the House. By Mr. Pitt's plan an allowance was made to a married man in proportion to the number of his children. In the then state of the country a great number of children was considered a great blessing, but such blessings had been showered upon the country in such abundance since then, that the great difficulty was how to dispose of them. The noble and learned Lord had said that the poor-laws were bad in

themselves and badly administered. He would say a word by-and-by as to the first point, but as to the bad administration, he would admit that there might be individual cases where magistrates abused their power by going beyond or not coming up to the law, but if, as in almost all cases, the complaint was that the magistrates had given too liberal a construction to the law, he did not see how they could improve it by taking the administration of it out of their hands. One great ground of objection to the present system was, that it allowed the payment of wages in part out of the poor-rates; but whatever might be thought of that system, it was only in those cases where it was impossible for a man to obtain wages sufficient for the support of himself and his family. The noble and learned lord complained of the 43. of Elizabeth as a bad law. That was the first time that he (Lord Wynford) had ever heard of that law being complained of as a bad law. He had heard the statute of Charles II. complained of, and he agreed with Adam Smith in his condemnation of it; but the 43. of Elizabeth he would assert was not a bad law. There might have been abuses under it, but in principle it was good, for he could not conceive why the impotent should not receive relief, or why the man who was able and willing to work should not receive some relief, or have work provided for him. He conceived that the poor who were unable to work, and those who had no employment, but were able and willing to work, had a right to relief. If, in the mode of administering the 43. of Elizabeth, abuses had occurred, and he would not deny that there had, was it necessary that the whole machinery of their administration should be destroyed? The quarter sessions would, he contended, be quite sufficient to correct any errors or abuses which might have crept in, without the intervention of such an arrangement of machinery as this bill proposed. The abuses had been said to be great, and the reports of the commissioners teemed with statements to that effect; but without meaning any disrespect to the commissioners, he must say that they were imposed upon, for he firmly believed that few, if any, such cases existed in the country as they had thought fit to lay before Parliament. The granting relief to the impotent, and providing for, or giving some relief to, the able-bodied poor man who was willing to work, which was the principle of the 43. of Elizabeth, could, he contended, be very efficiently provided for without such machinery as the bill proposed. As to the law of settlement, he thought it would have been much better to have abolished it altogether than leave it as it was in the bill. He was disposed to concur with the noble and learned Lord that the settlement by birth would be preferable to that now in the bill, but he thought that the taking settlement away from apprenticeship was most unjust, impolitic, and cruel. The case had been discussed some year or two back in that House, on the question of taking settle-

ment away from apprentices to mariners. After some remarks on the hardship of taking away the settlement acquired by apprenticeship, and throwing the pauper back on the place of his birth, the noble and learned Lord adverted to that part of the bill which granted loans to the poor, which he cordially approved of, and for which, if there were not so many objectionable parts in the bill, he would be disposed to support the second reading; for he had seen many instances in which such small loans to the poor had been productive of the best effects. With respect to the bastardy clauses, he was glad that the framers of the bill had not attended to the recommendation of the commissioners. One of the grounds of that recommendation was, that the throwing the burden on the woman exclusively would diminish the number of bastard children; but supposing that it would diminish them nine-tenths, he would prefer the law to remain as it now stood rather than that a different system, such as that in the bill, should tempt (as we understood the noble and learned lord) the guilty parent to raise her hand against her own offspring. He had seen statements of cases in the reports of the commissioners where women considered it a little fortune to have three or four illegitimate children, from the allowances for whose support they obtained a maintenance. He must believe that in such accounts the commissioners were imposed upon; but supposing that the account were as it was stated, the 43. of Elizabeth was sufficient to correct the evil, if that act were duly enforced; for by that act the allowance was not directed to be given to the mother, but was to go to the parish, to be applied to the support of the child as might be thought proper; so that, in fact, no encouragement was held out by that act to the mother to increase the number of her illegitimate children, if the law were duly administered. He was inclined to think that the greatest inducement held out to the woman on such occasions was not the hope of the allowance which she might receive, but the promise or prospect of marriage; but these were left untouched by the bill, and would have their full force under its operation, as much as they had at the present moment. He would contend that the enactments against bastardy as they now stood would be found as fully sufficient as, and more sufficient than, those of the bill before their lordships. He must say that on the whole he was struck with horror to think that the poor of this country should be placed at the mercy of a central board of three, or at most of 12, commissioners. With respect to this central board, he must say that he considered it altogether unnecessary. The ground on which it was proposed was to establish an uniformity of practice in the administration of the poor-laws; but that was impossible, for every parish would be administered according to its particular circumstances, and a central board could not prevent it. How would it be possible for two out of the

three chief commissioners, necessary to constitute a board, to examine and control the affairs of the 12,000 parishes in England? The central board would in his opinion be impotent for good, but most potent for evil. Another part of the bill to which he had a strong objection was the power of forming unions of parishes, by which the poor of two or more parishes might be sent to the same workhouse, by which the parish, comprising a populous town, might be united with a rural district. Was not this mixture of a town population with the comparatively innocent one of the country likely to be productive of most immoral consequences? By the law as it now stood, a power existed of uniting parishes by consent of each; but the people of the country, acting on that sense of their own interest which the noble and learned Lord on the woolsack admitted was the safest rule to go by in the management of their affairs, did not avail themselves of this power. Yet the commissioners, without considering what might be the interests or the inclinations of parishes, had the arbitrary power of uniting them at their pleasure. They were to have the power of appointing and paying men to assist in carrying on the enactments of the bill. They had, in fact, the power of taking as much money out of the pockets of the people as they pleased. The noble and learned Lord had said that there were acts which gave powers equal to the bill now before the House. He (Lord Wynford) was not aware of the existence of any such acts. He knew of no act by which any such powers were given to subjects in this country. Some persons were horrorstruck in this country at the passing of the Mutiny Act, by which the power of framing regulations, of deciding upon their infraction, and then of executing them, was given to the King. But in the present case nearly the same objection would lie in one sense, and a still higher objection in another. The commissioners were to have a much greater power than the legislature was willing to give to the King, and they were not only to exercise this power themselves, but were even authorized to delegate it to others. There was, he repeated, no statute in existence which conferred any similar powers upon any set of men in this country. They had the power of granting or withholding allowance to the poor—of deciding whether, to get that allowance, the pauper and his family were to go into the workhouse or not—of regulating the mode in which he should be fed, or in what other way he should receive his miserable pittance. Talk of slavery in the West Indies, for the abolition of which we were about to pay so large a sum! He would say, "Pass this bill, and the condition of the poor of this country will be worse than that of the serfs in any part of Europe, than that of the villeins who belonged to the soil of this kingdom in former times, or than that of any of our negro slaves in the colonies." He also objected to



the bill as establishing a dangerous and unconstitutional precedent. The salaries of the commissioners were not fixed by the House of Commons. These were to be fixed by the Crown, by whom the appointments were to be made. Here were permanent appointments to be made by the executive and the salaries named, which salaries were to be made good by the House of Commons. Carry that principle out a little further and there would be an end of the constitution of the country. He had now stated the objections which he entertained to this measure. He believed it would not be found to touch the evils which it proposed to correct, but he considered it chiefly objectionable on account of the enormous, nay, frightful power which it conferred on the commissioners. Under these circumstances he thought it would be advisable to postpone the bill to another session, and in the mean time their lordships might obtain the advice of practical men on the subject; for, as to the commissioners, it could not be denied that they had been prevented by other important duties from paying much attention to the practical effect of the poor-laws. He apprehended that if the present measure should pass its effect would be to alarm the poor of the country, and bring them in immediate contact with the Government. This was both impolitic and dangerous, and he conceived it to be much better that the poor, if they felt aggrieved, should blame the local magistrates than be led to find fault with the general government of the country. The bill would, he was assured, spread dissatisfaction throughout the country, and would substitute general violence in the place of partial disturbance. (Hear, hear). He therefore entreated their lordships to proceed cautiously with the bill, and in order that they might have time to consider maturely its bearing on every part of the country, he should move as an amendment to the original motion, "That the bill be read a second time this day six months."

The Earl of WINCHILSEA said, that though he differed widely from the Ministers with respect to their general policy, it was his intention to support the second reading of the present bill. At the same time he was most anxious to see some of the clauses amended, for the purpose of making them more beneficial than they were likely to be in their present shape to the labouring classes. The present measure was of the highest importance, whether considered as affecting those interests which were at present depressed by the maladministration of the poor-laws, or the moral character and independence of the labouring population. He believed that none of their lordships who were opposed to the present bill would venture to maintain that the poor-laws, as they were at present administered, were not productive of great evils; (hear, hear), and he really thought, that as no other mode of correcting those evils had been suggested, they were bound to give the present bill their serious attention. (Hear, hear).

The principle on which the statute of Elizabeth was founded was humane and wise; it was not the law, but the maladministration of the law, which was the cause of mischief; and he thought that the magistrates of England had acted most injudiciously in making no distinction when administering the poor-laws between the industrious and indolent labourer. With respect to the hasty clause, he could not concur in the observations which had fallen from the noble and learned Baron (Wynford). He believed that the proposed change would have a very beneficial effect, for the laws, as at present administered, offered a direct encouragement to profligacy. With respect to settlement, he thought that that part of the bill which abolished settlement by hiring would be found exceedingly beneficial to the labouring classes, because it would tend to open the labour market to the honest and industrious peasant, who would no longer be confined to his own parish. (Hear, hear). But it was absolutely necessary that this provision should be followed up in the next session of Parliament by the establishment of a system of poor-laws in Ireland. (Hear, hear). As the bill at present stood, it was provided that no labourer should be able to obtain a settlement, except by occupying a tenement of the value of 10*l.* a year. The bill, as at first introduced, contained a clause providing that a child, on attaining the age of sixteen, should have a settlement in the parish where he was born. As the settlement by hiring and serving was abolished, he thought it desirable that this clause should be retained, otherwise on the death of a labourer a great deal of litigation would be caused in ascertaining in what parish his children had a settlement. He thought, too, that the clause relating to settlement by rating would be greatly improved by raising the value of the tenement to 15*l.* or 20*l.*, because as it stood at present it would indispose persons from letting a small piece of ground to a labouring man. He thought that their lordships were the more bound to afford the labourers every facility to acquire small pieces of ground for their own cultivation, in consequence of the injury they had suffered from the enclosure of commons. He approved of that part of the bill which permitted allowance to be given out of the workhouse to able-bodied men. Had the provision remained as it stood when the bill was first introduced, he should certainly have opposed it; because it made no distinction between the industrious and the idle labourer. He admitted that he looked at that part of the bill relating to the commissioners with some degree of jealousy. He allowed that the power proposed to be conferred on them was new and unconstitutional; yet, looking at the state of the country, he was bound to say that their lordships must grant extraordinary power, if they wished to see the administration of the poor-laws brought into a wholesome state. He maintained that it was not in the power of the magistracy to

establish a uniform system of laws; and if they attempted to do so, they would utterly fail. He had himself been an active magistrate in three different counties; and he could assure their lordships, that though the poor-laws in the three counties were the same, the difference in the administration was so great, as to render its identity imperceptible. If some uniform system were not adopted, to be applied, of course, with some modifications to different parts of the country, having for its object the encouragement of the industrious, and punishment of the improvident, he was confident that all the changes contained in the present measure would assuredly fail of producing any advantage to the country. He should give his support to the second reading, from an honest and conscientious conviction that the tendency of the bill was to improve the condition of the labouring population. (Hear, hear).

The Earl of ELDON was very indistinctly heard, but we understood him to state that he did not rise to object to the principle of the bill, but to oppose the second reading at the present period of the session. In his opinion, their lordships ought to consider during the recess what effect the provisions of the proposed measure were likely to have on the country; and he thought that if they passed it in the present session, they would be doing an act in great haste which they ought only to do after great deliberation.

(To be continued.)

### LETTERS ADDRESSED TO ME

must be sent to Bolt-court, and to no other place whatever; and no two-penny-post letter to be sent which is not *postage paid*. Very frequently these two-pences amount to the day-wages of a labouring man.

From the *LONDON GAZETTE*,

FRIDAY, JULY 18, 1834.

#### INSOLVENTS.

ADDY, J., Sheffield, table-knife-manufacturer.  
BACK, R., Gardiner's-lane, Upper Thames-street, and Trig-wharf, carman.  
COCKING, T., Great Portland-street, Mary-bonne, chemist.

#### BANKRUPTS.

BRIGGS, W., Vine-yard, Richmond, tailor.  
ELLIOTT, T., Earl Shilton, Leicestershire, tallow-chandler.  
GROVE, T., Stourbridge, Worcestershire, miller.

JENNINGS, H., Feversham, Kent, innkeeper.  
MORGAN, J., Newport, Monmouthshire, grocer.

TAPSTER, T., Quadrant, Regent-street, iron-monger.

WEEKS, J., Langford, Somersetshire, grocer.

#### SCOTCH SEQUESTRATIONS.

DAVIDSON, R., Aberdeen, soap-manufacturer.

LOVE, J., Glasgow, merchant.

THOMSON, T., Finnerley, near Kinross, farmer.

TUESDAY, JULY 22.

#### INSOLVENTS.

FREEMAN, H., Rochford, Essex, draper.

TURNER, R., Church-street, Kensington, licensed-victualler.

#### BANKRUPTCY SUPERSEDED.

SEMPLE, J., Commercial-wharf, Regent's-canal, Hampstead-road, timber-merchant.

#### BANKRUPTCY ANNULLED.

SMITH, T., Edgware-road, hosier.

#### BANKRUPTS.

BROOKS, J., Wells, Somersetshire, mercer.

BUCKLEY, J., Hollingrove, Yorkshire, merchant.

COLLIS, J., Fleet-street, tailor.

CUE, C., Blackfriars-square, Gloucester, retailer of beer.

GIBSON, W. H., Liverpool, hatter.

HADWEN, J., Lockwood, Yorkshire, cotton-spinner.

JONES, J., Liverpool, grocer.

MOORE, T. S., Colegate, Norwich, bombazine-manufacturer.

OLIVER, W., Easington-lane, Durham, chemist.

WALKER, H., Worcester, glove-manufacturer.

#### LONDON MARKETS.

MARK-LANE, CORN-EXCHANGE, July 21.—

The continuance of wet weather during Friday, Saturday, part of Sunday, and to-day, added to short supplies coastways, as well as by land samples, caused the millers this morning at the opening of the market to come more freely forward as purchasers, but factors meeting their demands by an advance of full 3s. per quarter on the rates of this day week, caused the business to be at first limited; towards the close, however, several sales were effected at an advance of 2s. per quarter for the finer qualities, and full 1s. per quarter on the secondary descriptions. No new samples were exhibited. Nothing transpiring in London Corn.

Barley comes sparingly to hand, and fully supports its previous quotations. The present



weather is reckoned favourable for the growing crops, as it will tend to render the grain mellow, though it may endanger its colour. A few samples of new Barley were shown differing in quality, but we did not hear of any parcels being offered for sale.

Malt was dull, and last week's rates were barely supported, as the malting quality of Barley is expected to be good, and samples early at market.

The supply of Oats has been large, and principally from Scotland. The market evinced little animation, and the clearance effected was limited at a decline of 6d. to 1s. per quarter on the prices of this day se'nnight. In bonded qualities we heard of no sales, and the whole of the late foreign arrivals have been taken to granary.

Beans steady in value, but the demand very moderate.

Old white Peas maintained their former quotations; fine new Suffolk qualities realized 50s. to 52s., and some were held at 55s., and new hog, 40s. to 42s.

Ship Flour continuing scarce, was held at a decline of 1s. per sack, and millers were not anxious to sell to any extent at last week's currency.

Wheat, Essex, Kent, and Suffolk	44s. to 47s.
— White .....	47s. to 54s.
— Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire.....	40s. to 45s.
— White, ditto .....	45s. to 50s.
— West Country red.....	41s. to 46s.
— White, ditto .....	46s. to 49s.
— Northumberland and Berwickshire red..	38s. to 43s.
— White, ditto .....	40s. to 45s.
— Moray, Angus, and Rothshire red.....	36s. to 41s.
— White, ditto .....	42s. to 43s.
— Irish red .....	35s. to 39s.
— White, ditto .....	39s. to 41s.
Barley, Malting .....	30s. to 32s.
— Chevalier .....	30s. to 32s.
— Distilling .....	30s. to 31s.
— Grinding.....	27s. to 30s.
Malt, new .....	37s. to —s.
— Norfolk, pale.....	50s. to 57s.
— Ware .....	52s. to 55s.
Peas, Hog and Grey .....	36s. to 40s.
— Maple .....	40s. to 42s.
— White Boilers .....	45s. to 49s.
Beans, Small .....	31s. to 36s.
— Harrow .....	31s. to 36s.
— Tick.....	31s. to 34s.
Oats, English Feed .....	22s. to 24s.
— Short, small .....	23s. to 25s.
— Poland .....	23s. to 25s.
— Scotch, common .....	23s. to 25s.
— — Potato .....	26s. to 28s.
— — Berwick .....	25s. to 27s.
— Irish, Galway, &c. ....	22s. to 23s.
— — Potato .....	25s. to 26s.
— — Black .....	22s. to 23s.
Bran, per 16 bushels .....	11s. to 12s.
Flour, per sack .....	43s. to 46s.

## PROVISIONS.

Butter, Dorset .....	40s. to —s. per cwt.
— Cambridge .....	40s. to —s.
— York .....	38s. to —s.
Cheese, Dble. Gloucester	48s. to 68s.
— Single ditto.....	44s. to 48s.
— Cheshire.....	54s. to 74s.
— Derby .....	50s. to 60s.
Hams, Westmoreland..	50s. to 60s.
— Cumberland ...	46s. to 56s.

## SMITHFIELD, July 21.

This day's supply of Beasts was tolerably numerous, but in great part of indifferent quality; its supply of Sheep, Lambs, Calves, and for the time of the year, porkers, both as to numbers and quality, moderately good.— Trade was, with prime Beef, Mutton, Lamb, and Veal, somewhat brisk; with the three former at an advance of about 2d., with the latter from 2d. to 4d. per stone, with the middling and inferior kinds, as also with Pork, dull, at Friday's quotations.

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